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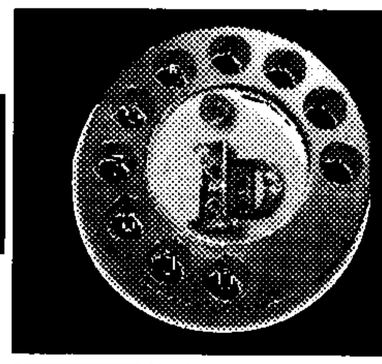

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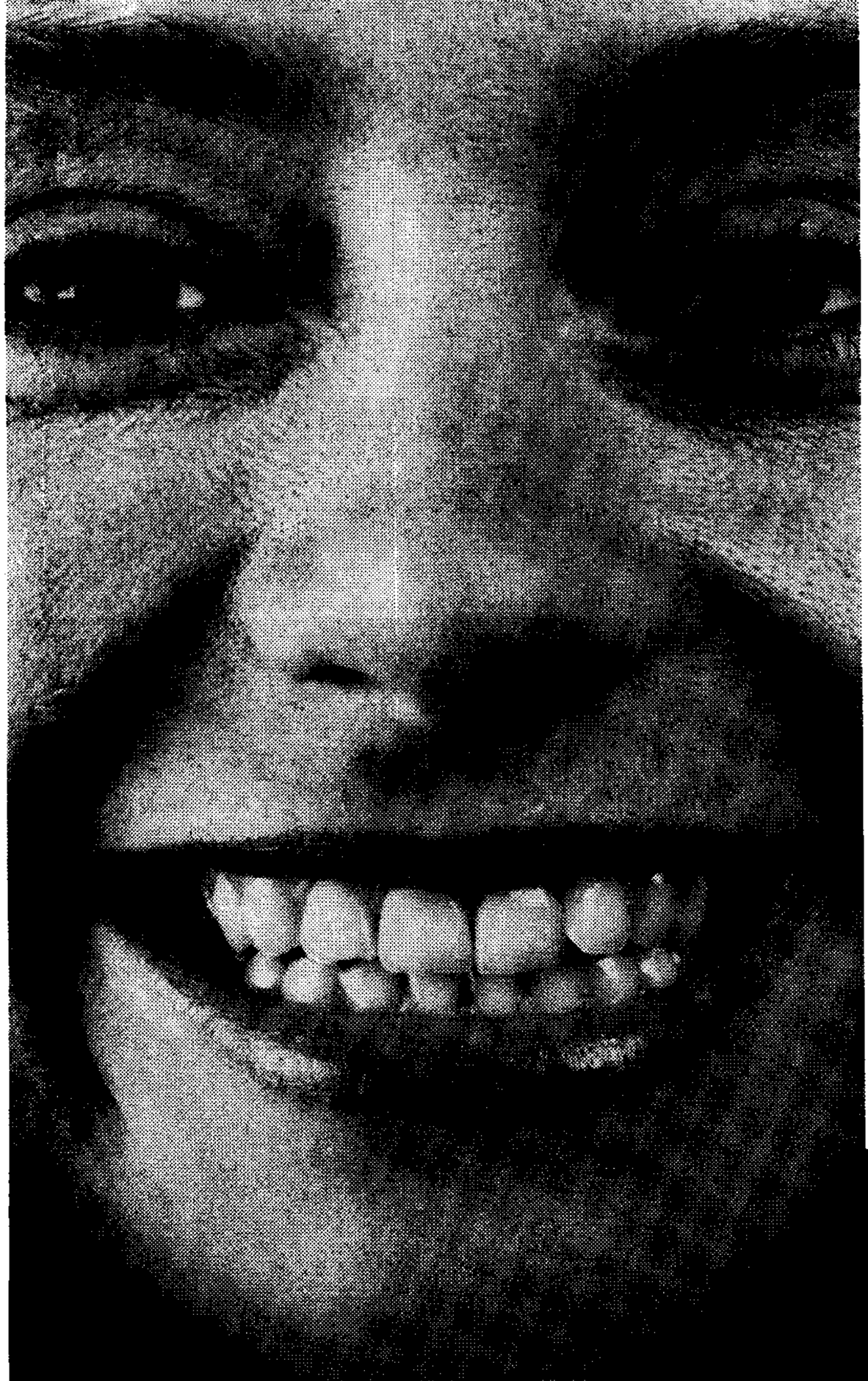

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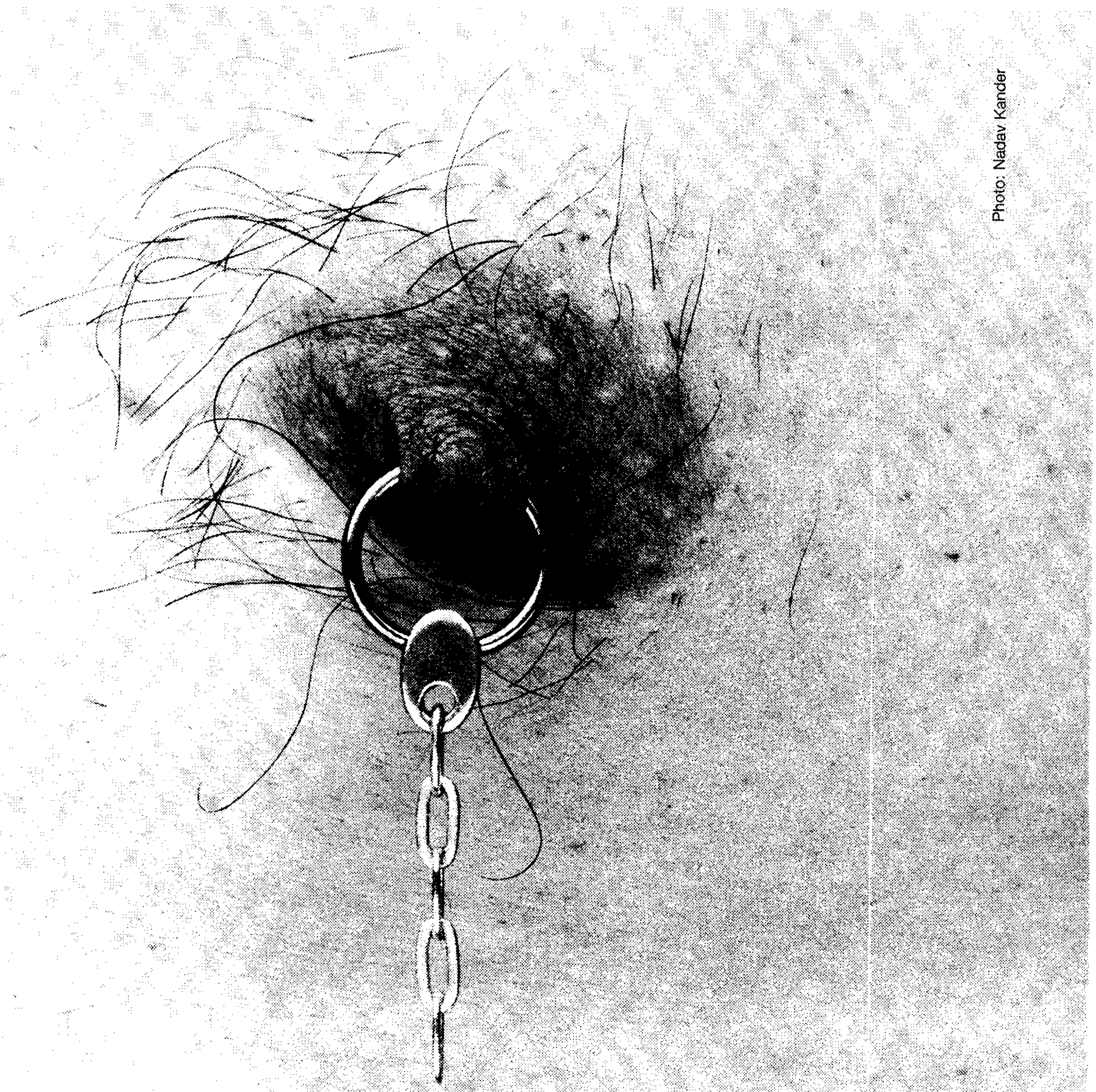

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THE reaction of the media to the proposed takeover of all British retailing by my American conglomerate Gnome-Mart has been predictably negative.

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Cover picture of *Reservoir Nobs* features (left to right): Mr Green, Mr Bland and Mr Blobby

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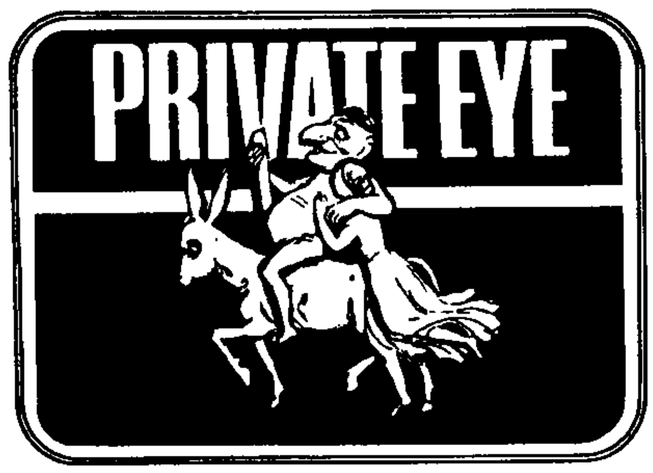

COLOUR SECTION

GORDON BROWN parades the $100bn third world debt relief package agreed at the G8 summit in Cologne to demonstrate our leaders' commitment to the global good – but fails to mention that what "new" Labour giveth with one hand, it taketh away with the other.

While the treasury cuts and cancels monies owed by the world's poorest countries, offering them "a lasting exit from their unsustainable debt burdens", the government export credits guarantee department (ECGD) is busy increasing that debt.

Using taxpayers' money, the ECGD underwrites arms deals, notably still insuring Hawk jets sent to Indonesia by British Aerospace, despite that country being in a state of political and economic meltdown. In this way it is able to claw back £3-£4bn a year from defaulting third world governments.

The ECGD's control mechanisms are its advisory council and annual review. The council is made up of private sector executives from companies such as Rolls Royce and NatWest, whose deals the department routinely guarantees. The annual review, which the *Guardian* predicted would bring in sweeping changes in 1999, bowing to pressure from campaigners, is in fact an internal assessment conducted by the department of trade and treasury, who will interview the ECGD's corporate clients to form a rounded picture of the department.

The chancellor spoke in support of debt relief on *Channel Four News* on Friday 11 June. "Of course," he told Jon Snow without a trace of irony, "these countries should not be buying military weapons".

DESPITE its "ethical foreign policy", Labour's love affair with the arms industry was well-illustrated by the recent honours list.

No fewer than 17 ministry of defence civil servants cleaned up with OBEs and MBEs. Three senior executives from weapons producer GKN Westland Helicopters and the managing director of British Aerospace's international marketing and sales division also picked up OBEs and CBEs.

The Queen's birthday honours was littered with medals for officials and businessmen responsible for exporting arms, too.

What is equally noticeable is the absence of awards to the home office, department of health and ministry of agriculture – only one MBE between them. Clearly, flogging arms is far more important to this government.

WHEN Ken Livingstone proposed that Trevor Phillips, the black TV producer turned London mayoral wannabe, might consider running as his deputy, a ferocious Phillips hit back accusing Leninspart of "racism".

Yet as recently as January, running for deputy mayor was exactly what Phillips was intending. The *Evening Standard* reported that "new" Labour had stumbled upon a "dream ticket" to block the feared Leninspart and that Glenda Jackson and Trevor Phillips had received "informal overtures" from senior Labour figures to run as mayor and deputy mayor respectively.

The fiercely ambitious but quite astonishingly boring Phillips told the *Standard*: "It's early days. I'm very much in favour of a team rather than one individual – but whether I'm part of the team remains to be seen." The "dream ticket" rapidly fell apart as soon as Labour members got wind of the identities of the nightmarish double-act, but none of this subsequently stopped Phillips launching his campaign to be mayor, coaxing money from friends to hire the services of former Millbank press officer Adrian McNenamin to spin on his behalf.

Livingstone on the other hand has been told he cannot even campaign to be mayor before the "party has selected a candidate" – ie any candidate whose name is not Ken Leninspart.

THE independence and investigative powers of the parliamentary select committees, whose job is to inform the public about abuse of power and to advise on how to prevent it, has emerged clearly from the Jonathan Aitken case.

The former chief secretary to the treasury's long career of lying, cheating and arms peddling was subject to a detailed, penetrating inquiry by the Commons trade and industry select committee in 1996. At issue was Aitken's connections to companies such as BMARC, which illegally sold naval guns to Iran during the Gulf war.

All the MPs on the committee, in the face of all the evidence to the contrary, proclaimed that Aitken, a former minister of the crown, could not possibly have committed such a crime, and that even if BMARC had sold guns to Iran, Aitken could not have known about it.

Most of the MPs agreed with director Aitken's description of his chief accuser Gerald James as "en route to the funny farm". Coming from a man who was himself en route to prison, was this an example of Aitken stabbing himself in the foot with the simple sword of lying?

Number crunching

22% of population voting Conservative in the *disastrous* '97 election

8% of population voting Conservative in the *triumphant* '99 euro-election

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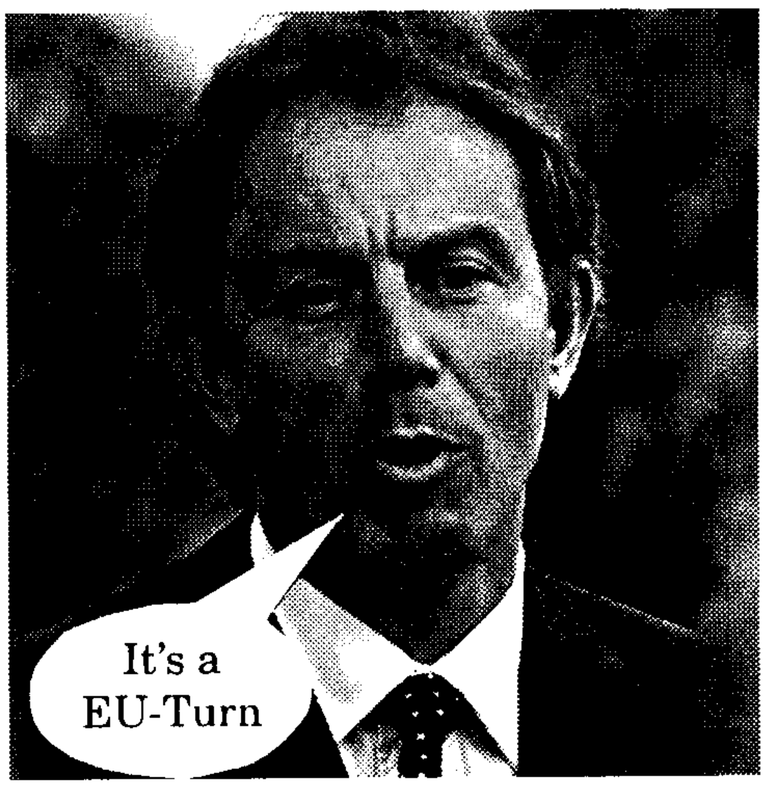
BLAIR'S NEW STAND ON EURO



Street Of Shame

THE morning after the Sword of Truth finally kebabbed Jonathan Aitken, the papers printed pictures of any old prison van saying it contained England's answer to J.R. Ewing on his way to HMP Belmarsh. But the *Daily Express* trumped the lot. Its front page had a picture of a gaunt and shirtsleeved Aitken taken through the window of his unluxurious transport.

A good picture. So good, in fact, that old Bailey officials are convinced that money must have changed hands somewhere and a probe is underway by Securicor, which runs the privatised security operation at the country's premier criminal court. Suspicion was aroused when the photographer appeared to know exactly which of the darkened windows of the van, a "meat wagon" in prison-speak, concealed Aitken. Questions are also being asked about why the van stopped briefly at the gates to allow the snap rather than sweeping out in front of stopped traffic – a courtesy afforded to less famous prisoners.

But there's nothing new under the sun. Security guards and prison warders have been supplementing their wages for years by tipping-off the press about infamous prisoners' movements. Phone Belmarsh and ask if Aitken's there and you'll be told they can't tell you on security grounds – but as soon as he's moved warders will race for the phones.

FROM the ruins of Kosovo comes a most touching tale, courtesy of the *Sunday Times*.

Chris Cobb-Smith, an OSCE inspector, fell in love with Alma Sallauka after meeting her in a Prizren bar a few months before the war. But shortly before the Nato bombing started he had to return to England, not knowing if he would ever see her again.

Then came the news that she had reached Albania. "Now," the *Sunday Times* reveals, "he knew he had to find Alma Sallauka again." He traipsed round the Albanian refugee camps, and after "hours of fruitless inquiries" he arrived outside a crumbling building. "'Is Alma Sallauka here?' he asked once again. He waited, doubtful of any positive reply. Then out of the doorway emerged a woman every bit as beautiful as he had described. Shyly at first, they hugged before the words began to tumble out."

All most moving – except that the words had already been tumbling out for some time. Although the *Sunday Times* forgot to mention it, Alma was an interpreter for a Sky News reporter in Albania, Chris Roberts; and while supposedly "searching Albania's refugee camps" Cobb-Smith was actually in constant touch with his "lost love", persistently ringing her on Roberts's satellite phone – to the Sky man's increasing annoyance.

JUST FANCY THAT!

"Anthony Hopkins, who played Lecter, has not yet agreed to appear in a film version of Hannibal, which already has been optioned for a record-breaking £5.6m. He is believed to be concerned about the effect of violence on viewers. Jodie Foster is said to be keen to reprise her role as agent Starling."

— *Guardian*, news section, 8 June

"Anthony Hopkins seems certain to star in Hannibal, but the signs are less promising for Jodie Foster."

— *Guardian*, G2, 8 June

AN ex-spy flees to Moscow and goes into business exporting KGB and 007 cocktails – you couldn't make it up. Well, all right you could... but only a fool would be taken in.

And *Sunday Times* intelligence (*sic*) correspondent David Leppard *was* taken in when he penned a fantastical piece on 13 June entitled "MI6 defector to mix himself a Moscow cocktail".

Richard Tomlinson, the brainy but bonkers maverick (he has a Cambridge first in engineering) who began a campaign against MI6 after it unceremoniously ejected him from its employ, gave Leppard several clues that he was not telling the whole truth. Subtle pointers in the description of the Bond-based cocktails might have thrown doubt on the more serious claims that Tomlinson, who has been expelled from Switzerland, has taken up residence in Moscow. He hasn't.

WHY did Boyzone singer Stephen Gately choose to announce his homosexuality to the world via the *Sun*, a paper not famed for its tolerance?

As the Murdoch rag put it coyly, Gately was prompted to open his heart because he "believed that someone was planning to sell a twisted version of the story". This was true – and the *Sun* of course was only too happy to run it.

As the rag had informed Gately three weeks earlier, it had the dirt on him. Either he "opened his heart"... or else.

Gately didn't get much help from his pisspoor PR agents, the aptly-named "Outside Organisation". Faced with what can only be called blackmail, his agents rejected two options which were open to them – sending their client either to the police or, more effectively, to the *Mirror* to spoil the Wapping hack's "world exclusive". Instead they gave the *Sun* exactly what it wanted. Outside represent a number of pop artists, including Boyzone's up-and-coming next generation, teen band Westlife, as well as Posh Spice and David Beckham, whose marriage next month is likely to be the highest profile showbusiness event of the year. Having seen the *Sun*'s vicious coverage of the marital difficulties of Spice Girl Mel B, who refused the paper any pictures of her own wedding last year, Outside is keen to keep the paper on side. If that means Gately and his boyfriend having to, er, open their hearts, so be it.

The story was originally set to run in the first week of June, coinciding with the start of Boyzone's stadium tour in Dublin. However, Gately's "interview" was held over for three weeks by hack Andy Coulson and editor David Yelland's desire to persuade the hapless singer into giving them a double whammy by agreeing to out another musician in a similar position. Commendably, he refused to do so. Not that any reader would have known this from the paper's coverage. "The *Sun* does not out gays", an editorial loftily intoned this week. It appears Yelland has a short memory: not only has he forgotten the lurid column inches devoted to the sex lives of Russell Harty, Elton John, Martin Bowley QC and countless others by Kelvin MacKenzie in the 1980s, but one of his own front pages from last December seems to have slipped his mind too.

"The public has a right to know: ARE WE BEING RUN BY A GAY MAFIA?" it screeched. That story was prompted by another "courageous decision" by agriculture minister Nick Brown. He announced his homosexuality when the *Sun*'s sister paper, the *News of The World*, threatened to print the "revelations" of an ex-lover.

ONCE again the massed oracles of the Street of Shame did themselves proud with their European election predictions.

The *Express* could barely hold back on the day of the poll: "It would be easy to laugh at the Tories' latest mishap," its leader column chortled. "Poor William Hague seems to stumble from one disaster to another... These troubles are, however, made infinitely worse by the party's anti-Europeanism."

The paper's headline on the day the results came through described the mood at Blackfriar's Road as much as at Millbank: "Labour Red Faces Over Tory Glory".

Over at the *Independent* the paper was maintaining its usual individual line and nailing its colours to the mast of a fellow no-hoper on election day: "Mr Hague's party seems intent on turning itself into a fringe sect by advocating more and more unrealistic policies... far more sensible, and as worthy of attention as any other, is the Pro-Euro Conservative Party. This is a brave undertaking that deserves to succeed. *The Independent* hopes that they will maintain their momentum."

Strangely there was no mention of the rump sect's no show (they won a grand total of no seats at all) in the *Indy*'s coverage of the results, beneath the humble headline "Tory showing vindicates Hague line".

Then there was clever Peter Kellner, "new" Labour apologist who juggles his role with that of "impartial" psephologist to the *Observer*, London *Evening Standard* and *Newsnight*. Before the elections, Kellner wrote in the *Obs:* "William Hague's reprieve as Tory leader following last week's local elections may be short-lived... His party is heading for a bad result in the June 10th elections for the European Parliament."

Not half as bad as some of the pundits, however.

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore

Billie Jean King Kong

RICHARD BRANSON's appointment of *Sunday Express* finance hack Steven Day to head PR for a proposed Virgin mobile phone venture just days after Day had been promoted to deputy editor of the sickly Sunday was such important news that it was splashed across the front page of *PR Week* and was a main story in *UK Press Gazette*.

Day will receive a salary not unadjacent to £100,000, plus profit-sharing bonuses and options. But those close to Branson may be wondering why he has had to spend anything. For Day and the section he edits have been longtime unpaid cheer leaders for his Virgin financial products.

On 4 April 1999, Steven Day wrote: "The launch of Virgin Direct in 1995 gave the PEP (personal equity plan) a huge fillip, taking it to the masses in a way traditional fund managers had failed to do."

On 18 April, Day wrote an adulatory piece entitled "Branson in plan to float Virgin Travel." Day drooled: "A float would earn Richard Branson, who has personal wealth of £1.2 billion, around £600m."

On 2 May the *Sunday Express* reported that "Richard Branson pledged this week to pass on any base rate cut to borrowers." (Branson has a fraction of 1 percent of the mortgage and loan markets.) But it was on 9 May that Day (who suddenly left the 1996 Virgin Christmas party in a Kings Road restaurant following a disagreement with bouncers) went overboard in praise for his future master.

In an amazing front page splash, Day proclaimed that Branson should become a director of the Nationwide Building Society, demutualise it and hand over £2bn to charities. Branson, who is a miniscule competitor of the Nationwide, told Day: "This was a most fantastic opportunity to do some good in the millennium."

And where was the exclusive story of Branson's mobile phone venture? In the *Sunday Express* on 6 June, where Day also announced to the world he was taking Branson's many shillings. Many readers will not notice the difference.

"EXCLUSIVE: Comic's Clinic Agony" shrieked the *Mirror* over the news that a flood of tabloid stories about Lenny Henry failing to have sex with anyone other than his wife and not taking drugs had driven the comedian into what the rag coyly called "a bit of a breakdown".

Editor Piers Morgan seems to believe his readers share his obsession with *Sun* editor David Yelland and was quick to take the moral high ground. "Lenny Henry's life has been ruined by the guttersnipes at *The Sun* who hounded him..." said his organ.

Perhaps it has been. But it was Mirror Group stablemate the *Sunday People* that then nipped in quick with its own "World Exclusive: Cocaine Party Shame of Sex-Mad TV Lenny" – although about this lurid and damaging non-story, Morgan's *Mirror* remained strangely silent.

TURKEY's brutal treatment of the Kurds has often been exposed and denounced in the *Observer* – as has the willingness of western businesses to turn a blind eye to these human rights abuses "in the interests of trade".

Odd, then, that the *Observer* carried a 16-page supplement two weeks ago, stuffed with puff-pieces on the Turkish government's achievements but carefully avoiding any mention of Kurds or human rights.

This is the latest in a long line of *Observer* advertorials for regimes with an "image problem", a collection that has also featured Suharto's Indonesia and Abacha's Nigeria. All claim to be published by Images, Words, Ltd, who are "solely responsible" for their content; the *Observer* salves its conscience by being responsible only for the *distribution* of their contents.

But Images, Words, Ltd does not exist. There is no record of it or anything like it at Companies House (where all limited companies must legally be registered), or in BT's phone directories. The address listed in its *Observer* supplement is PO Box 4210, London SW1Y 6XW – an address very like that of another puff-factory, Unimedia Ltd (PO Box 4598, London SW1Y 6XE), which specialises in selling arslikhan guff about "controversial" regimes to newspapers such as the *Times*. In fact, both box numbers are operated from the same Duke Street office.

The reason for all this subterfuge – like the ultimate ownership of Words, Images, Ltd – remains a mystery. Less mysterious is the disgust felt by *Observer* hacks when they find their newspaper carrying these PR magazines.

IN a feature on "loony cults" last year, the *Daily Mail* had particular sport with the Guru Maharaj Ji, the tubby teenager who first visited Britain in the early 70s and recruited thousands of disciples for his Divine Light Mission.

"Many followers gave all their spare money to the Divine Light organisation so it could spread the message of peace," the *Mail* recalled, "refusing to believe they were merely subsidising their leader, who had a vast estate in California next door to Paul Getty, and a fleet of luxury cars." Since then, it added, he had changed his name to Maharaji and become "even richer and fatter".

Rather to the embarrassment of Associated Newspapers, it now transpires that the Mail's resident astrologer Jonathan Cainer has become a convert to this "loony cult". He and three other devotees recently created a website (www.enjoyinglife.org) "for those who appreciate the teachings of Maharaji". The Maharaji himself has described the arslikhan website as "beautiful". But then the guru has an eye for beautiful things: his newest toy is a $20m Lear 4 jet, the latest in a long series of private planes.

Cainer says that he spent two years "making appraisals" before committing himself to the guru. "It took me two years of careful questioning before I felt ready to trust that he was on the level... It made me feel sweetly, safely, strongly at home." Maharaji also knows a thing or two about being "strongly at home": he lives in a 21-room Malibu mansion, complete with swimming pool, sauna, massage room – and a nine-car garage to accommodate his Rolls-Royces.

IN a culinary and aesthetic first the *Eye* is inviting readers to visit their local McDonald's outlet to fill in a nomination form for the Disney Channel's Kids' Awards.

Ballot papers for the September ceremony to be attended by Elisabeth Murdoch and possibly her pa (Disney is part of Sky's multi-channel package) were distributed to 900 McDonald's in May giving punters the chance to select their favourites in 14 categories ranging from pop stars to computer games.

The original voting forms were withdrawn, however, when organisers realised nominees for Sports Star of the Year included one who has been well and truly *Screwed*, as it were, by Murdoch's hacks, Lawrence Dallaglio.

Is this a prudent step to protect youthful viewers from an alleged drug dealer – or a hasty measure to avoid any embarrassing scenes for the Murdoch family?

Dallaglio's name has been removed from a replacement form, but voters are advised to fill in the blank end box if their favourite is not named. The awards' slogan is "Your choice, your vote" – so, readers, the choice is yours.

HACKWATCH

CAMPAIGN MEDALS

Wisest Experts

"However successful Nato's air bombing may be it will not change Milosevic's principal objective of driving the Albanian population from Kosovo. That would require an all-out war with deployment of ground troops – something Nato refuses to do." — **General Sir Michael Rose**, *Mirror*, 25 March.

"It was only a week ago that the optimists were assuring us that the Nato bombardment would cripple the Serbian war machine and drive Slobodan Milosevic back to the negotiating table. Disbelieving them, I used this space last Sunday to argue for a full intervention, on the ground as well as in the air. I was in a small minority then. But after the worst week in Nato's history, a growing number of people are driven to accept the logic... Milosevic has only ever backed down when faced with a powerful combination of air power and ground forces. He will not be moved on Kosovo by air strikes alone." — **Martin Bell**, *Mail on Sunday*, 4 April.

"The effect of Nato's bombing has been to radicalise and unite Serbian opinion to such an extent that it is hard to imagine the refugees ever being allowed to return to their homes." — **Niall Ferguson**, *Guardian*, 10 April.

"Either a risky ground war must be fought soon, almost at once, undoubtedly shedding Nato blood, or else we must let those hundreds of thousands die in the mountains. There is no other choice and it has to be made today." — **Polly Toynbee**, *Guardian*, 23 April.

"The bombing has deflected world attention from the enormity of Kosovo's fate. As a result the only strategy ever likely to dislodge Serb forces from Kosovo, a ground attack, is now barely conceivable..." — **Simon Jenkins**, the *Times*, 12 May.

"The resulting military enclave will comprise a desert to which few Kosovans will be inclined to return... No Yugoslav government will accede to the [Kfor] invasion and few Kosovans will acompany it." — **Simon Jenkins**, the *Times*, 26 May.

Smartest Tactical Retreat

"Whatever happens, poor Yugoslavia will stagger on, groaning under its crony-infested socialist system, and Slobodan Milosevic will remain in power." — **Boris Johnson**, *Daily Telegraph*, 2 June.

"This time, surely, Milosevic has pushed his luck too far... Something tells me that it will not be long before the Serbs rise up and chuck out the man who has for so long perverted their patriotism." — **Boris Johnson**, *Daily Telegraph*, 16 June.

"This macho bombing strategy is crazy. It will solidify popular support behind Slobodan Milosevic." — **Paul Routledge**, *Mirror*, 24 March.

"Nato bombs are the best recruiting sergeant Milosevic could wish for." — **Paul Routledge**, *Mirror*, 14 April.

"Belgrade is partly in ruins, flattened by Nato bombs. Hundreds of innocent Serbs have died. But the tyrant Slobodan Milosevic is still in power, and more popular with his people than ever." — **Paul Routledge**, *Mirror*, 12 May.

"Remember, it is only three years since Serb demonstrators in Belgrade almost brought down their president in a scandal over vote-fixing. The wrath of the people may yet be directed as much against their leader as against the faceless Nato generals who have smashed their country to smithereens. The Yugoslav people have put up with much from their adventurist president, who has made their country an international pariah. They hate that." — **Paul Routledge**, *Mirror*, 8 June.

Boys' Own Paper Award

"There he was, the first British soldier into Kosovo, Capt. Fraser Rea... One felt a ludicrous but irrepressible sense of pride... his crisp, Home Counties accent... the Union Flag flying... I cannot deny it: I felt the cheap sentiment of pure patriotism." — Biggles goes to Kosovo, aka **Boris Johnson** in the *Sunday Telegraph*, 13 June.

"At dawn yesterday, long lines of military vehicles blocked the roads around the Kosovo-Macedonia border crossing at Blace. Slowly manoeuvring my motorbike around heavily armed gurkhas, however, I was able to make my way to the top of the convoy... Shortly after 4am, Brigadier Adrian Freer, commander of 5 Airborne Brigade, gave the order to move in. When he led the way, driving 100 yards towards the border crossing, I followed on my bike... To ride in and out of a military convoy as I did during the next few hours was a unique and thrilling experience... Freer allowed me to move freely and I rode alongside the vanguard, a few yards behind his Land Rover Defender..." — **Mark Franchetti** gets all revved up in the *Sunday Times*, 13 June.

Most Observant Hacks

"It was the silence that gave away the horror. At first sight the beautiful little town of Kacanik looked peaceful and intact, nestling in a green basin of hills..." — **David Harrison**, *Sunday Telegraph*, 13 June.

"The beautiful little town of Kacanik lies in a perfect bowl in the hills... It looked peaceful and intact — except for the silence..." — **James Dalrymple**, *Independent on Sunday*, 13 June.

"Moving closer, we could see that every window had been smashed. Inside, every room had been stripped of its furnishings. There were no curtains or ornaments. Even the door handles and light fittings had been removed... carried off in every vehicle they [Serbs] could beg, borrow or steal... Anything that could not be taken was smashed and destroyed." — **David Harrison**.

"When we looked more closely we saw that every window had been smashed and every room stripped. There were no curtains, no ornaments, no door handles, no light fittings. Every item of value had been removed... carried away in any vehicle they could beg, borrow or steal... What they could not take, they trashed." — **James Dalrymple**.

"It was the first of many strange sights..." — **David Harrison**.

"It was the first of many strange sights..." — **James Dalrymple**.

Most Fulsome Apology

"Even the least well-informed soon began to grasp that bombing alone was unlikely to bend Milosevic to Nato's will... Any head of government who persisted in advocating the use of air power for that purpose alone was unlikely to retain credibility." — **John Keegan** ("the world's foremost military historian"), *Daily Telegraph*, 28 April.

"At the end of the second month of bombing, victory through air power remains an improbable outcome. If Nato does not rapidly deploy ground troops, and if his people stand up to the bombing, he could still be defying Nato next spring." — **John Keegan**, *Daily Telegraph*, 16 May.

"It now does look as if air power has prevailed in the Balkans... 72 days of bombing seem to have broken the Serbian government's intransigence... I was, almost until the last moment, wrong and I reproach myself for not having seen the light sooner." — **John Keegan**, *Daily Telegraph*, 4 June.

JOHN GLASHAN

1927–1999

Private Eye Cartoonist and Illustrator
died on 15th June

PETER MANDELSON may have been exiled and Alastair Campbell may have been busy "helping" Jamie Shea at Nato high command, but for "new" Labour new habits die hard. No sooner had the party's apprentice spin doctors digested the likely dismal results of the European elections than an immediate sacrificial lamb was sought.

Margaret Beckett, Labour's Euro election co-ordinator, learned from the Sunday newspapers – in other words before a single result had been announced – that she would be facing the chop. The real architect of "new" Labour's trouncing, Dear Leader Tony Blair, had mercifully succeeded in putting clear pink water between Labour's campaign (which was based solely on the Dear Leader and his wondrous qualities of, er, leadership) and Labour's worst result since Michael Foot's "longest suicide note in history" election disaster in 1983.

Meanwhile Cap'n Pantsdown's retiring broadside as he stepped down as leader of the Lib Dems was to blame Blair for his party's pisspoor showing at the polls. "Tony Blair has failed to provide leadership over the single currency and Europe", announced the pompous Pantsdown to a comatose nation, ignoring the fact that the Lib Dem manifesto was strangely silent over the single currency. So great were Pantsdown's own leadership qualities that Britain's foremost pro-European party only meekly promised to "hold a referendum" on monetary union.

Paddy should remember not to be cheeky to Tony in the future if he hopes Tony will give him a nice new job now that he is out of one.

THE campaign to succeed Paddy Ashdown as leader of the Liberal Democrats is underway, with six contenders vying to fill the captain's old boots. All six MPs are standing on a bold platform. All six want to be the "new leader for the new times".

In a bid to capture the hearts of ordinary Lib Dem members, each offers a distinctive radical manifesto. And with so many candidates, Lib Dems must surely be spoiled for the choice of policies on offer? Well, up to a point – and only if you count their views on the party's love-in with "new" Labour. So where do the six dwarves stand on this, the only issue of their time?

Front runner Charles Kennedy seeks to place himself "firmly in the centre ground" of Britain's premier league centre party. He urges "cautious co-operation with Labour". Lib Dem education spokesman Don Foster is "less cautious" than Charles Kennedy over links with Labour, but although being more positive has, since the Euro election debacle, become more negative. Unlike Kennedy, Foster is seeking to place himself slightly to the centre right of the centre left, but still firmly in the centre of things.

Foster is "dramatically more positive" over links with Labour than David Rendel, who is negative while positively supporting the joint Lib-Lab agreements on constitutional change and foreign affairs. Malcolm Bruce is more negative than Charles Kennedy and Don Foster, but slightly more positive than David Rendel. Simon Hughes on the other hand is significantly more negative than Charles Kennedy and Don Foster and ever so slightly more negative than David Rendel and Malcom Bruce. But Simon Hughes's positive, yet prudently negative reasons for being sceptical over yet closer links with Labour does not mean that he supports the ending of cooperation with the government. No: Simon Hughes is seeking to place himself on the "radical wing" of the Lib Dems, somewhat to the left of the centre of the centre left. Meanwhile Jackie Ballard is positioning herself firmly on the radical wing somewhat to the left of the left of centre, and is more negative than anyone else over links with Labour – apart from, er, David Rendel, Malcom Bruce and Simon Hughes.

Jackie Ballard's leadership campaign theme "Who Cares, Wins" was unveiled as a stage backdrop amid scenes of frenzied excitement at the House of Commons. But it was only after the BBC camera crew returned to base that they realised their footage would have to be dropped or further cropped to avoid acute embarrassment. The word "Wins" was strangely missing from the film – leaving only the horribly prophetic comment... Who Cares.

OUTGOING Lib Dem leader Paddy Ashdown did his best to trumpet second place in the Leeds Central by-election as a "superb result" amid the record low turnout.

But would Paddy have been quite so pleased with himself if he had known that his candidate Peter Wild had spent the campaign rubbishing his Lib Dem colleagues in Scotland for caving in over tuition fees ("incredible") and by attacking Nato bombing in Serbia for doing more harm than good?

"I'm throwing my pants into the ring"

BLACKBURN isn't notorious for anything much – except perhaps for appointing Lady Thatcher vice-president of its football club – but suddenly the Lancashire town is the focus of frantic activity in the criminal justice system.

Over the last few months those in the field – from police and social workers to probation officers – have been having to implement a plethora of "new" Labour's crime and disorder experiments: child safety and parenting orders, final warning schemes, action plans, youth offending teams, at the same time as piloting other schemes to reduce delays in getting to court. They are also grappling with the tagging of young offenders.

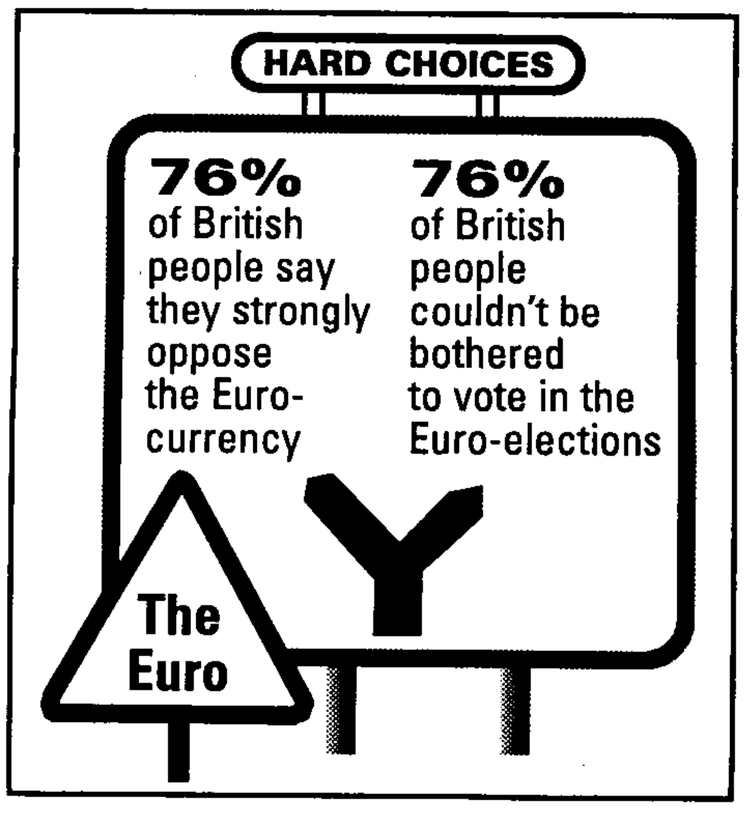
But as one insider said: "It's bad enough having all these pilots, we also have the home secretary breathing down our necks to ensure they work."

So keen to prove that his "tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime" policies do work, Jack Straw last month ordered a home office inspector to investigate when one offender failed to turn up for his probation interview – a common hazard when dealing with criminals.

"Last year there were over 350,000 court reports submitted by probation officers. It is unheard of for an inspector to look at one failed appointment," said Harry Fletcher of the probation officers' union.

Could it be that the case triggered reports in the local press that the scheme for fast-tracking young offenders wasn't working – and that the honourable member for Blackburn is none other than the home secretary himself?

PS: He also sits alongside Lady Thatch as co-vice chair of Blackburn Rovers.


HARD CHOICES
76% of British people say they strongly oppose the Euro-currency
76% of British people couldn't be bothered to vote in the Euro-elections
The Euro

AS predicted in the *Eye*, Labour-sponsoring arms company Raytheon has won the £800m contract to build battlefield spy-plane system ASTOR.

Defence secretary George Robertson celebrated the contract with a promise that the new system would end "mistakes" such as those during the Kosovo war. "The days of carpet bombing are over," he explained, "and we need to hit military installations and avoid civilian casualties."

Post-war techno-hype is an old favourite for Raytheon, which built its current position on the apparent success of its Patriot missiles in the Gulf War of 1991. When the conflict ended, however, serious questions were raised about just how effective Patriot really was.

Then, in 1994, Raytheon won a contract from the Brazilian government to build the Amazon Vigilance System, another "eye in the sky" scheme. According to the *New York Times*, the CIA helped Raytheon beat French defence giant Thomson-CSF by collecting information on their financing terms, and by supplying evidence that Thomson was bribing Brazilian officials.

This was deliciously ironic: for, after Thomson's failure, Raytheon itself was accused of bribery. The Brazilian police tapped the phone of president Cardoso's chief of staff, Julio Santos, after receiving anonymous tip-offs about drug trafficking. Instead of drug talk, the tapes revealed a conversation between Santos and Jose Afonso, a Brazilian representing Raytheon. When Afonso complained about a senator who was blocking Raytheon's bid, Santos asked: "Haven't you already paid this guy?"

The company survived the scandal by insisting that, whatever may have been said, no bribe was paid. But the Brazilian air force minister had to resign after wiretaps showed that he had been enjoying rather too much hospitality from Raytheon's Brazilian representative.

Naturally no bribery was involved in the latest contract. Raytheon simply followed the correct procedures in New Britain – hiring a Labour-friendly lobbyist (GJW), sponsoring the Labour party and flying Labour MPs to Paris.

HOPES that the Welsh assembly would prove a less petulant arena than Westminster were shattered recently when Plaid Cymru members... all walked out in a huff.

Labour's Lynne Neagle had claimed the nationalists want to set up an "embassy" in Brussels costing £3m a year. The row saw Dafydd Wigley, the nationalist leader, scoring nul points in a head-to-head with his old rival Lord Elis-Thomas, the Plaid Cymru peer who lords it over the proceedings as speaker (see *Eye* 977).

Wigley tried to raise a point of order and demanded that Ms Neagle "no longer be heard". Elis-Thomas refused. Red-faced Wigley then stormed out of the chamber followed by his loyal troops.

MARGARET THATCHER wanted to stuff the miners because she saw them as the enemy. Tony Blair wants to stuff the miners because... er, someone else told him to do it, which is the difference between the bad old politics of confrontation and the nice new politics of consent.

Thus a joint campaign by parliamentary lobbyists and the American government has made Labour abandon its refusal to grant licences for new gas-fired power stations.

The moratorium on gas stations was meant to protect what remained of the British coal industry. But then the US company Enron set to work: it hired lobbyists GJW to badger ministers, and also took the wise precaution of becoming a Labour party sponsor.

And didn't it do well? On 10 June energy minister John Battle announced that Enron could build a gas-fired power station at Teesside. As well as sabotaging the government's feeble commitment to look after coal, Enron is also embarrassing its "new" Labour friends by offering huge fat-cat payments to Wessex Water directors when the company floats on the New York stock exchange.

Although the Wessex story got some coverage, many papers missed the link with Labour-sponsor Enron because the firm cunningly named its wholly-owned water subsidiary "Azurix", which was enough to throw most hacks off the scent. And even less attention was paid to the inevitable follow-up: that Enron proposes to increase Wessex water prices by as much as 34 percent over five years.

LABOUR's proclaimed championing of the rights of whistleblowers will be examined most intriguingly in the courts this autumn.

Twelve years ago a Doncaster councillor, screenwriter Ron Rose *(The Bill, Heartbeat, Between the Lines*, etc), claimed that the Labour council was corruptly run by a so-called "Mining Community Group" (MCG) operating outside the rules of the party. Rose was dumped from the Labour group in 1990 for "going to the press, against standing orders". The attack on him was led by fellow councillor Kevin Hughes, now MP for Doncaster North and a government whip (see *Eyes* 945 and 948).

In the following years Rose was physically assaulted twice: once by fellow councillor Norman Fisher, recently arrested as part of Operation Danum's inquiry into "Donnygate" corruption – and once by Kevin Hughes, whose excuse was "He stood between me and the fucking door". A complaint against Hughes, a prospective parliamentary candidate at the time, was logged in Labour HQ's correspondence file, but not acknowledged.

An attempt by Labour councillors to chuck Rose and his family out of their council house on fabricated grounds, against the advice of their own officers, was thrown out by a judge in 1990, who awarded substantial aggravated damages.

Throughout this process Rose kept a couple of pals briefed on the affair. One was Tony Blair, whom he first met while canvassing in the future PM's Sedgefield constituency before the 1987 election. He later urged Blair to make a friend of Rose's old lover, Mo Mowlam, MP for nearby Redcar. Shortly afterwards Rose wrote to Blair urging him to consider standing for the Labour leadership in the future.

In the wake of the 1997 Donnygate scandal – 26 arrests so far – Rose, now entirely vindicated, applied to be a councillor once more. Turned down by a panel that included new leader Malcolm Glover (who was charged last week on 10 counts of false accounting), Rose appealed to a regional panel and was again rejected. Reasons given were that he continued to attack the new regime; and "activities during the 1997 election". These included urging people not to vote for Hughes on the grounds that he had been a violent member of the MCG; press reports that he had kept Blair informed of the Doncaster scandal down the years; and an allegation that Rose had been paid to campaign for a local anti-sleaze candidate.

This latter claim was investigated by Inspector Knacker as an offence of non-declaration of expenses, and found to be completely without foundation. Its regurgitation in written form as "evidence" against Rose is clearly defamatory.

Rose now intends to seek redress in the libel courts. The Labour party will be invited to prove what the police have already disproved. And Rose will get a chance to detail his case against Hughes, for whom, problematically, yet another victim of his flying fists has emerged.

Of course the only way to prove Rose discussed these matters with his friend Tony Blair will be to call the man himself to the witness box and ask him directly.

NOOKS and CORNERS

ENGLISH Heritage has just published a new version of its *Buildings at Risk Register* which catalogues all grade I and II listed buildings which are at risk. Over a fifth of these – 230 buildings – are in immediate danger of destruction. What is particularly scandalous is that 17.5 percent of these buildings at risk are owned by central government or local authorities, who ought to be setting an example.

To make matters worse these neglectful local authorities often fail to enforce the law in the 20 percent of cases where a private owner is responsible for the ruination of a fine and potentially useful building.

"The register represents a backlog of inaction and missed opportunities stretching back over half a century," is the comment released by the chairman of English Heritage, Ol' Piranha Teeth. "This is no way to enter the next millennium." More to the point, it is no way to enter next week. And it is not just the grade I and II buildings that matter: there are thousands of ordinary listed buildings rotting away all over Britain. Here are two:

● TO the west of Hereford once stood Stoke Edith House, a great 17th century mansion which was the home of the Foley family. It burned down in 1927, but the stable blocks and lodges survived. In the 1980s, anxious to complete the work, Mr Andrew Foley applied for listed building consent to demolish the stable blocks. It was refused.

Since then he has let nature take its course. The roofs have failed and parts of the structure have collapsed. What could and should have become handsome Georgian residences are now ruins. And that is not all. There is also a gamekeeper's house designed in a picturesque Tudor style by the great John Nash. It was depicted in Humphry Repton's "red book" for Stoke Edith Park; now it is also a ruin.

So why doesn't the local authority – now Herefordshire council – impose a repairs notice on Mr Foley and insist that these listed buildings are repaired or, if not, sold that others might repair and enjoy them?

● AT Cheddleton near Leek is Windy Arbour, a farmhouse built in 1721. When it was listed grade II in the early 1980s it was described as being unaltered for over a century. Soon after the roof was taken off. The building is owned by Mr John Pointon, owner of a local animal feeds company. So what is Staffordshire Moorlands district council going to do about fulfilling its responsibilities by protecting this historic building?

"The condition of the building is well known to us," reported the "conservation manager" last year. So is he doing anything? Er, no. "With regard to serving a repairs notice, the owners of the building have the option of not complying with it. Under law, this would force the district council to purchase the building, an option it cannot consider at present due to financial constraints."

In fact this is nonsense. The local authority has the power to carry out repairs itself and charge them to the owner — who, in this case, has more than a bob or two. And, after all, if it is then obliged to purchase the neglected building, the cost of a roofless ruin is scarcely going to be high. So this craven surrender to "financial constraints" is simply a cop out, but it is true all over Britain.

At risk: Gamekeeper's House designed by John Nash

Local authorities do have the powers to enforce the law over statutorily recognised historic buildings, but are usually terrified of using them in case they are saddled with costs and, worse, ownership. In effect we have listed building legislation that fails to protect listed buildings. At least Staffordshire Moorlands district council has a "conservation manager": many local authorities fail to employ a conservation officer even.

Of course if the government took a lead over looking after historic buildings, local authorities might behave better. And another thing it could do, with ease, is to reform the absurd tax system over listed buildings. At present, any owner needing to restore or maintain his listed property must pay 17.5 percent VAT over and above the cost, but if he wants to extend it or build a swimming pool in the grounds, say, the building work is VAT exempt. In other words, struggling house owners or church restoration committees are actually being encouraged to bugger up historic buildings rather than look after them.

PS: According to English Heritage, it would only cost £400m to save the country's finest listed buildings from ruin – just half the cost of My Lord Rogers' plastic tent at Greenwich.

'Piloti'

BLAIR babe Margaret Moran, Labour MP for Luton South since the Glorious First of May, 1997, has spent £1,500 on a glossy brochure to be distributed to 37,000 homes in her constituency.

It will tell voters of her achievements over the past year and, er, remind them who she is – modestly squeezing nine photographs of Ms Moran into just four pages.

The exercise is timely. A poll last week by *Luton on Sunday* newspaper found that only one person in 10 interviewed in the town had ever heard of her.

THE Tories' theme tune was composed seven years ago by Andrew Lloyd Webber for the 1992 general election, so a replacement ditty is needed – and for inspiration William Hague need look no further than his newly appointed party vice-chairman, John Hayes.

Hayes was renowned for having his own theme tune in his days with the Federation of Conservative Students (*Eyes passim*). Sung to the tune of *John Brown's Body,* it went like this:

John Hayes' willy was a bloody awful sight
All messed up with gonorrhea and caked about with shite
The agonies of syphilis kept him awake all night
But he still went buggering on, etc...

Will fellow reshuffle winner Ann "the Virgin Queen" Widdicombe soon be singing along?

The fragrant Christine Hamilton is tiring of her regular appearances in the *Eye*, and is particularly exercised by the speed with which remarks she made at recent book launches held in Politico's bookshop were reported.

Politico's owner Iain Dale, a lifelong Tory and close friend of the Hamiltons, reveals that Christine has instructed him to "hunt down" the guilty party and "screw him into the ground".

'Backbiter'

"...and if you look up, you will notice that this delightful family home still retains the original coving and picture rail features..."

FTVE

Peak Performance (ITV)
Slave (C4)

THE rise of Lad TV has been one of the more unfortunate televisual trends of the 90s. Attitudes, language and interests (totty, football, lager, cars) borrowed from the mens' magazine market created the sitcom *Men Behaving Badly*, the game show *They Think It's All Over* and the motoring show *Top Gear*.

Yet these series borrowed part of the formula rather then the whole package (nudge, nudge, "package" being one of those many trigger words in lad language which are suggestive of sex.) Attempts to translate a lad's mag wholesale to TV have waited until now: ITV's **Peak Performance** and Channel 4's **Slave** are both bloke shows which come on videotape but which would be just as happy printed on shiny paper.

Unfortunately these homages arrive at precisely the time the gloss is going off the genre on the news stand with declining sales and the recent removal of an editor for commending the stylishness of the Nazis.

Peak Performance is hosted by Gladiator James Crossley. This is one of those shows which will always do poorly with reviewers because it assumes an audience with several pints of lager already downed. In fact it might be sensible to go out and get ratted before even reading the impending description of the show.

A resident poet/comedian delivers a series of terrible cock-jokes. For example, to the tune of the song "Happiness", he croons: "A penis, a penis, the greatest gift is a penis." Well, if his was in line with his other gifts, it wouldn't be worth having. Later, he offers the ancient observation that the old chocolate flake commercial was a representation of fellatio, adding the hilarious rider: "And a Mars Bar – that's even got veins!"

Next a group of giggly young women were invited to discuss how you could tell whether a guy had a really big willy before he took his clothes off. Was it true that big hands, big feet or a thick neck were a clue?

The women were then asked to bet on which of the guys in a police-style line-up would pack the largest... package. They dropped their pants – shot from behind, because this is television – before the camera pointed to the astonished gaze of the woman who had won the bet. At this point, the show got visions of intimidated men using their small and delicate hands to dial the Samaritans and Crossley hastily pointed out that it was not size that

matters but what you do with it.

Confirming that this small and pointless programme wasn't going to get many viewers coming again, the next sequence had Crossley strolling on a beach with a perky lady doctor who was an expert in impotence. She told the presenter that there was a spray untimely guys could try. Crossley said he'd try it out. He promptly sprayed his finger and then bit it. This was typical of *Peak Performance*'s dilemma: a lad's show which wasn't allowed to show you a dick – apart from the presenter.

There's another really big one hosting *Slave*, a new lifestyle show. Chris Cleverly is a barrister who wears thick black-framed glasses of the kind which are more to be seen in than seen through. Matt Collings, presenter of C4's new *This Is Art*, also has a pair. Collings also has sideburns, which Cleverly eschews, wearing his designer facial hair in a tuft on his chin.

Items include the fashion sense of weather girls, the candidates introduced by clips in which they say suggestive sentences such as: "It's going to be rather sticky." A service called Sell-By isolates the precise moment at which items of dress become naff: "Shawls: best before December '99 – Ponchos: expired." Then, aiming to reach out to female viewers as well, the show tried to answer the question: "What should your boyfriend wear under his Levi's?"

If *Peak Performance* was hampered by having to creep around the subject of penises, the difficulty for *Slave* is that it simply can't ever mention drugs, which are a large part of the world it is trying to describe.

The biggest shocks, though, came after the closing credits. "If you would like more information about studying Fashion or Media, ring this number...", advised a voice. Well, shag me, the whole thing was supposed to be educational. Then there was a teaser for the next week's programme. This showed weather girls talking about their fashion styles. They surely can't be planning to do meteorological fashion every week?

Listen, mate, if you're going to watch either of these programmes, you want to be well ratted first and, if there's any prospect of footie or a shag instead, you take it, my son.

'Square Eyes'

FOCUS ON QUIZ SHOWS ???

IN THE 1950s American television networks chanced upon an exciting new way to make money.

Forty years later it's happening again. *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?*, the most talked-about and watched quiz show in living memory, has updated the old *$64,000 Question* template with computer keypads, Phone A Stupid Friend Who Won't Know The Answer Either and Chris Tarrant's fantastically irritating catchphrases ("Are you sure? Is that your final answer?").

The last run in April pulled in an average of just under 15 million viewers (more than *EastEnders*) and peaked at more than 19 million. If Jeremy Paxman seemed more irritable than usual on the last series of *University Challenge*, this may have been the reason.

The trouble with asking a question like "Who wants to be a millionaire?" is that people tend to answer it. Broadcasting executives are particularly keen on becoming millionaires, and don't much care how they do it. So the old quiz show template has proved remarkably fertile, begetting lots of little baby quiz shows, all offering huge sums to dimwits who ring premium rate lines that will fund the prizes if anyone wins them, which they don't ever seem to.

On Classic FM, then, listeners to Henry Kelly's morning programme have been invited to take part in **One In A Million**. "The biggest prize in radio history", runs the jingle, for the top prize is in fact £1,024,000 – not that anyone has come anywhere near close to winning it, of course.

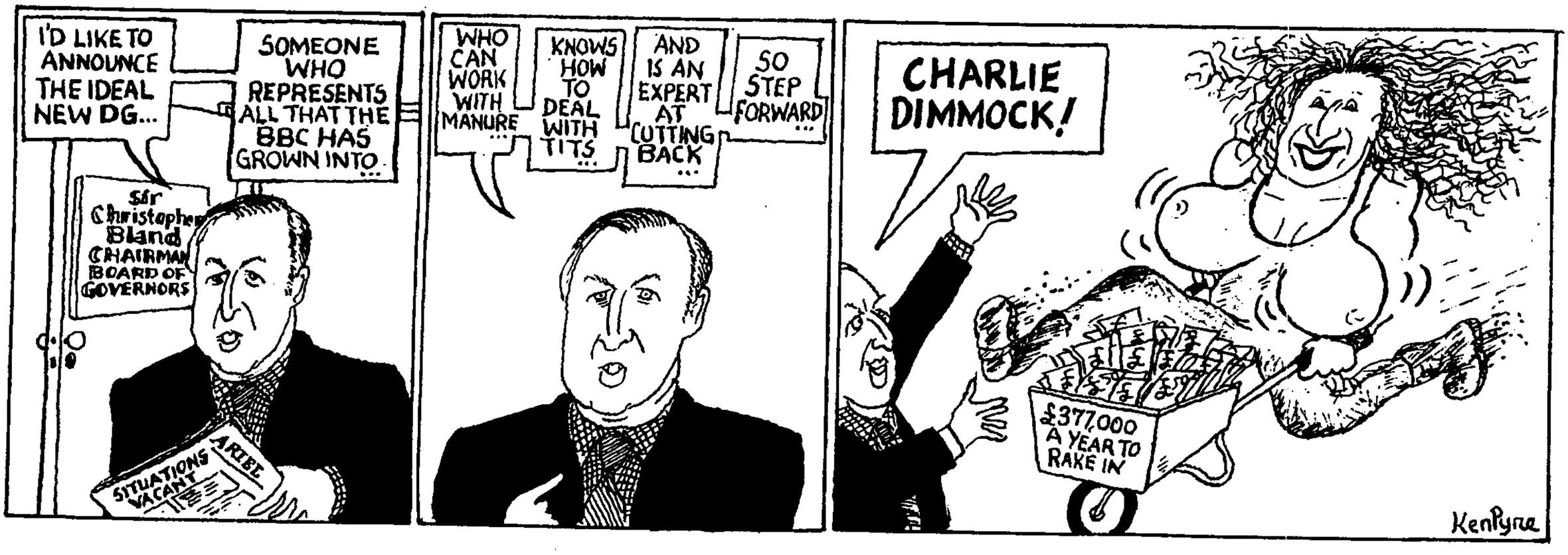
It's sponsored by the *Daily Mail*, although most of the early questions wouldn't trouble a *Sun* reader. (For £1,000: Who wrote the plays Hamlet and Macbeth?) Last week a man called Wayne did not know that the patella is another name for the kneebone or that Adolf Hitler was born in Austria, but still managed to win £8,000. For this he was fulsomely congratulated by questionmistress Ulrika Jonsson, who one presumes was paid rather more.

In its two weeks on air *One In A Million* gave away £203,000: a modest outlay, given the potentially vast sums generated.

Meanwhile, the national lottery show has sought to arrest its long-term decline with its own quiz, **Winning Lines**, hosted with an air of pre-recorded polish by Simon Mayo. Forty-nine contestants (one for each lottery ball) are asked an insultingly easy question, the answer to which is a number. If it's their number, and they get it right, they go through to the final and compete for a holiday of a lifetime (cue ancient stills of the Seychelles).

The giant brains behind this mess are Celador, the creators of *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* – although *Winning Lines* more closely resembles another of their formats, *Talking Telephone Numbers*. None of it makes sense, and it has nothing to do with the lottery, but if it keeps a million or so viewers tuning in when they would otherwise have switched off, then it'll have done its job. But does it really make sense to bury television and radio under an ever greater weight of increasingly duff and almost identical quiz shows? Are you sure? Is that your final answer?

'Couch Potato'


I'D LIKE TO ANNOUNCE THE IDEAL NEW DG...
SOMEONE WHO REPRESENTS ALL THAT THE BBC HAS GROWN INTO...
Sir Christopher Bland CHAIRMAN BOARD OF GOVERNORS
SITUATIONS VACANT
A REBEL
WHO CAN WORK WITH MANURE...
KNOWS HOW TO DEAL WITH TITS...
AND IS AN EXPERT AT CUTTING BACK...
SO STEP FORWARD...
CHARLIE DIMMOCK!
£377,000 A YEAR TO RAKE IN
KenPyne

MEDIA NEWS

"WE must fight and fight to win the argument for a well-funded BBC," announced John Birt at the latest meeting of the BBC forum in Birmingham. "We have come to the daunting conclusion that unless we get a proper settlement, we will not be able to sustain all our services."

This is an important admission from the outgoing D-G and shows that the vastly expensive foray into a raft of digital programming that nobody watches is beginning to take its toll on budgets.

The latest internal survey reveals that even the Beeb's own staff admit that programme quality is suffering (85 percent of producers and directors and 56 percent of managers felt things had worsened). And we all know that so much money has been hived off into digital that ordinary sporting fixtures are now beyond the Beeb's purse.

Sure, the BBC has plenty of awards for programmes, but there are ominous signs that the next director-general will have to begin office with a monumental grovel for a big and unpopular hike in the licence fee to fund even minimum programme standards.

All the more reason then to pick the kind of D-G the government "can do business with" – one who gives the Labour party a lot of money would perhaps do very nicely. This is why Greg Dyke's chances have not been totally torpedoed by his spectacular displays of party loyalty.

The urgent need for the next D-G to increase funding explains the timing of a couple of other big announcements too. With money such a sensitive issue, no incoming D-G wants to inherit the job of revealing that all the TV and radio staff so expensively moved to Stage 6 and White City are now going to be moved right back into central London. This story, broken by the *Eye* back in February (969), is now being extensively leaked to media pundits in time to point the blame at the man responsible for the disaster before he retires.

And no incoming D-G wants to start a campaign to hike the licence fee with the announcement of this year's annual report on 25 June, which will reflect the problems of morale and money outlined in Birmingham. So there will be no new D-G until after that.

FACELESS ITV supremo Richard Eyre has had publicity galore since being shortlisted for the job of BBC director-general. But one aspect of his life has escaped scrutiny.

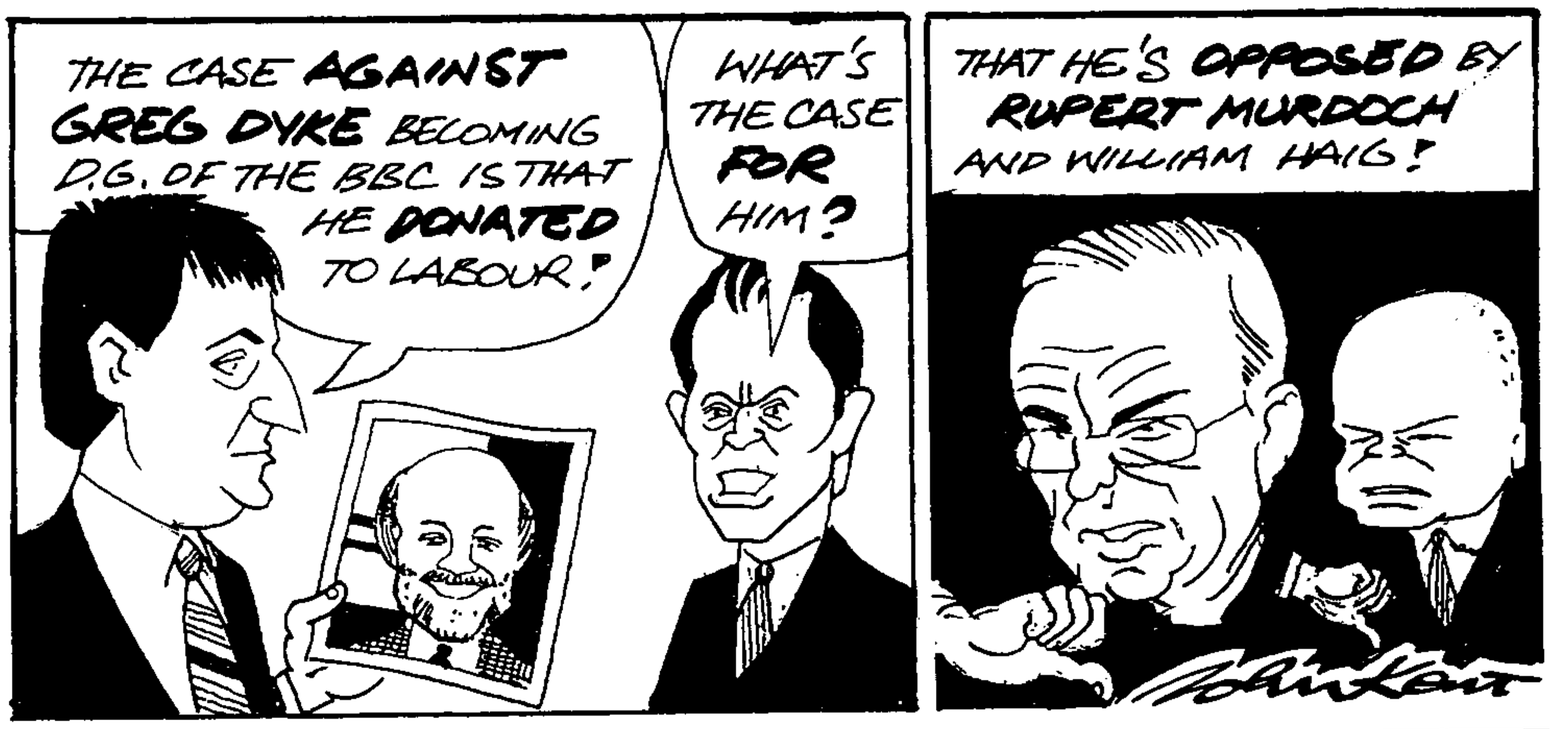
Eyre and his wife Shelagh are leading members of Folly's End Christian Fellowship, which meets in a converted warehouse above Murray's Meat Market in Surrey Street, Croydon. This is an extremely fundamentalist group run by "Pastor" Dave Markee, a former bass player with Eric Clapton, The Who and Frank Zappa, who had a religious conversion about 20 years ago and then decided to set up his own church.

Folly's End is intimately linked with the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship, with members of both churches continually flitting across the Atlantic for "intercession conferences" and the like. As in Toronto, Sunday services are filled with members of the congregation (Richard Eyre included) rolling on the floor, giggling hysterically, roaring like lions or shouting "Ho!" A couple of visiting preachers from Gosport who witnessed these scenes recently were at first dubious, but when Dave Markee pointed out that one of the writhing devotees was none other than the head of ITV, "our minds were put at ease..."

The church is also increasingly coming to resemble an American millennial cult. On its website (www.follysend.org) we are informed that God has declared World War III on the world: he will set the Middle East ablaze, unleash atomic bombs on Japan and establish Croydon (no less) as a strategic base for "dropping fire" on London and the rest of Europe. "WAR, WAR, I DECLARE WAR," God himself reveals on the website. "For very soon I shall pour out my Holy Spirit on the streets of Croydon. And there shall be great sorrow in this land..." Especially in Purley and Penge, presumably, which will be wondering what Croydon has done to deserve such an honour.

For seven days in April this year, Dave Markee and his followers stood on the church roof blowing a shophar, as a "prophetic act... to establish the city under the Lordship of Jesus". As a result of this action, "church leaders are now waiting to see what changes come about in the locality, particularly in the area of local government".

This refers to a campaign by Markee and Co to stop the local council licensing lap-dancing clubs, strip-joints and "explicit sexual displays". Who knows, if they blow their shophar for another week Richard Eyre may even stop showing *Bad Girls* and *The Jerry Springer Show*.


THE CASE AGAINST GREG DYKE BECOMING D.G. OF THE BBC IS THAT HE DONATED TO LABOUR!
WHAT'S THE CASE FOR HIM?
THAT HE'S OPPOSED BY RUPERT MURDOCH AND WILLIAM HAIG!

JOURNALISTS on the BBC's newly relaunched six o'clock news can rest easy knowing that, whatever the quality of the journalism, at least it looks good thanks to designer Martin Lambie-Nairn and the BBC style police.

Their attention to detail is such they have even advised presenter Huw Edwards that his usual hairdresser, in a salon at television centre, is no longer adequate. Henceforth the Welsh wonder will be despatched to Knightsbridge whenever he needs a trim.

BBC WALES, ever generous to its own, sent 11 staff to cover the Welsh rugby tour of Argentina recently at a cost to licence-payers of more than £50,000.

The two week jaunt took in two tests and three lesser fixtures – a schedule that didn't exactly tax commentators like former internationals Eddie Butler, Jonathan Davies and J.J. Williams and assorted Cardiff media stars from the BBC's Cardiff HQ.

Even Dai Smith, head of English language broadcasting, made the 8,000 mile trip to record a touchline interview with fly half Neil Jenkins. In return viewers were treated to test coverage on S4V (the Welsh language TV channel), commentary on Radio Cymru and edited highlights on TV.

LUVVIES

"Acting is exploratory by nature, so you travel over areas of your psyche. If I find something I don't like, I discover what's going on... I'm very interested in my mind as a laboratory."

MARTIN SHAW

Radio Times

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

O·B·N

Five minutes after meeting Stephen Fry I was snogging him! He's a lovely man, very shy, but with such an amazing mind. I just sat there thinking, 'What can I say to interest him?' He knows everything!'

IOAN GRUFFUD

Express on Sunday

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

THE Best Supporting Performance at this year's Cannes festival undoubtedly came from the unlikely showbiz editor of Teletext, Victor Olliver.

He started well on the first day by asking film director David Cronenberg at a press conference: "Why are we wasting our time here? We should be in Chicago for *Star Wars*, not listening to you failing to answer questions about a bunch of films no one in their right minds would sit through, even drunk."

This prompted a rant by the normally cool Canadian against British hacks, interrupted by shouts of "rubbish!" and "pure drivel!" from the excitable Olliver.

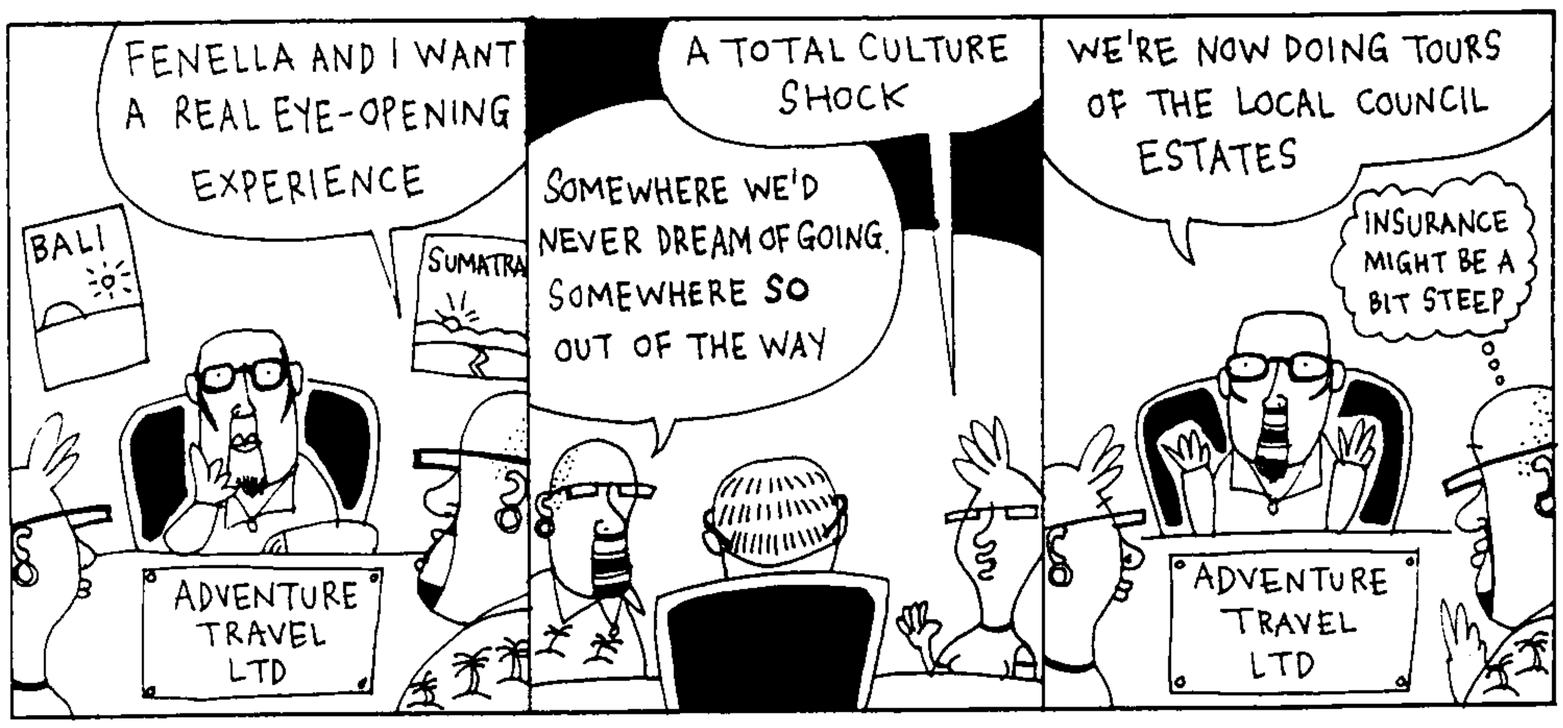
A little later, at publicist DDA's offices at the Majestic Hotel, voices were raised when Olliver advised the *Mail*'s statuesque Alison Boshoff to "get off your fucking stilts, dearie". And to Boshoff's constant Cannes companion, Jackie Burden of PA, he sniped: "Hanging around with the big girls, are we, for a few Tinseltown crumbs?"

At a reception the shameless hack strode up to Anjelica Huston and declared: "I understand that you read novels for movie purposes. Well, read mine. It's called *Farce Hole* and it's about a cunt in fashion." He then handed the book over to the astonished star.

Olliver's final triumph was to file a story headed "Moran Punctures Vinnie Jones's Ego". It quoted actor Nick Moran as saying that his fellow star of *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, Vinnie Jones, had jumped the gun in thinking he was a Hollywood megastar. Alas, Moran claims he was quoted out of context and is issuing blood-curdling threats against Olliver.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER


FENELLA AND I WANT A REAL EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCE
BALI
SUMATRA
ADVENTURE TRAVEL LTD
A TOTAL CULTURE SHOCK
SOMEWHERE WE'D NEVER DREAM OF GOING. SOMEWHERE SO OUT OF THE WAY
WE'RE NOW DOING TOURS OF THE LOCAL COUNCIL ESTATES
INSURANCE MIGHT BE A BIT STEEP
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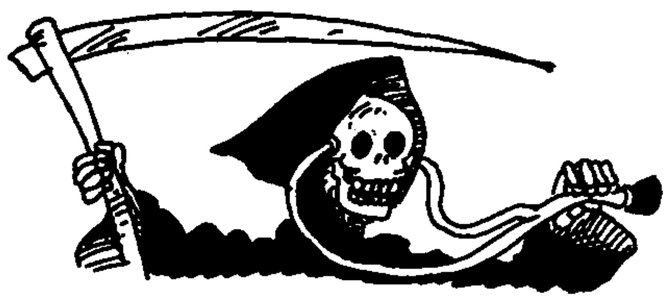


DOING THE ROUNDS

YET more proof arrives that the government's private finance initiative (PFI) is no cure for the ailing health service.

An independent scrutiny of the £177m private contract to build the new Dartford and Gravesham hospital – the pioneering PFI project – has called into question claims that it would deliver savings of £17m over the good old government borrowing system.

Under the contract Pentland, a consortium headed by Tarmac, is designing, constructing and financing the new hospital, while also providing a range of non-clinical services like maintenance, cleaning and laundry. The national audit office (NAO) has found that at best it will make savings of £5m, while it may actually end up costing more.

It has already emerged that staffing, clinical and other day-to-day running costs – some independent of the annual debt to the private contractors – are going to total £4m a year more than at the three hospitals it is replacing. West Kent health authority will fork out an extra £3m a year and the Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust will put up £1m, using money currently spent on the upkeep of the old hospitals. When the report was published, David Davis, chair of the Commons public accounts committee, said that when public bodies sign up to PFI, they musty be able to demonstrate that they provide good value for money. "At Dartford and Gravesham, this must be questionable."

Among its criticisms the NAO found that consultancy costs estimated at £300,000 spiralled unchecked to more than £2m and that the trust had been left with only one bid, so there was no proper competition. Further, its survey of GPs in the Dartford area found that more than half believed the new hospital would not meet patients' needs. One of the major concerns is that it will only provide 400 beds when it opens next year – 75 less than are available at the moment.

The Dartford and Gravesham hospital was the first PFI contract, paving the way to subsequent privately financed hospitals and the NAO generously points out that several lessons have since been learnt. Not the one about PFI not working, obviously.

'P.F. Eye'

M.D. is preparing his witness statement to the public inquiry into the high mortality rates for paediatric cardiac surgery at the Bristol Royal Infirmary (1984-1995). The *Eye* warned of these four times in 1992 (*Eyes* 793, 797, 804, 807).

Thanks, meanwhile, to another whistleblower who has passed on allegations about child heart surgery in another hospital. These have been put to the trust chief executive who has immediately ordered an inquiry and appointed an external assessor.

Watch this space to see if, as everyone hopes, warnings are now taken more seriously.

M.D.

"Doctor can't fit you in until Monday morning"

DOWN ON THE FUNNY FARM

THE recent scare over dioxin-contaminated eggs, chicken and meat in Belgium has not only thrown the Belgian economy into crisis and brought down the government of the delightful M. Dehaene. It has set off a stupendous row in Britain's egg industry, which is reeling under the European union's (EU) decision to ban battery cages.

When the dioxin scare began, the British Egg Industry Council (or BIEC, aka "beak", geddit?), announced that worries over Belgian eggs need not trouble consumers here. All they had to do was look out for the good old lion mark showing the eggs were British and they would be safe.

But the UK Egg Producers Association (UKEPRA), representing the dwindling number of smaller producers, then let the cat out of the bag by pointing out that the lion mark guaranteed... nothing of the kind. Under EU rules, eggs *packed* in Britain can be legally stamped with the lion regardless of their country of origin. In other words, the lion mark provides absolutely no assurance that eggs do not originate from Belgium or anywhere else.

This tactless counter-statement engulfed the egg industry in uproar. BIEC regarded UKEPRA as a traitor for exposing the carefully guarded trade secret, and several members of UKEPRA's own executive were so outraged by the revelation they resigned in protest.

This storm in an egg cup has also focused embarrassing attention on another industry trade secrets – the fiction that all grade A eggs sold in supermarkets have been laid within the previous three weeks.

Demand for eggs is highly seasonal. Peak sales, around Christmas, coincide with the time when supplies are naturally at their lowest. So demand can only be met by refrigerating millions of eggs and releasing them when demand is high.

The only trouble is that, also under the EU rules, refrigeration of eggs is illegal. So producers, supermarkets and government inspectors all connive at a practice which is against the law since they know that, if the law were rigidly enforced, the egg industry would collapse.

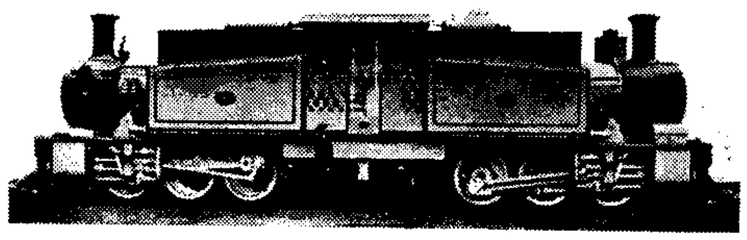
But this has anyway been made more than likely thanks to the EU's decision to ban all battery cages for laying birds by 2012. Animal welfare campaigners may cheer, but it is only a year or two since the eggmen had to invest tens of millions of pounds in new cages after the last time the EU changed the rules.

The industry has already been under severe strain because although the regulations were rigorously enforced by Britain, some of our EU competitors have been much more relaxed – which in a highly competitive market has given their battery producers an edge which UK supermarkets have been quick to exploit.

The real irony, however, is that when battery cages are banned altogether, this will not mean there will be no more battery eggs on supermarket shelves. Under world trade rules, the EU will not be allowed to ban imports of battery eggs from outside. The US egg producers, who operate vast production units dwarfing anything in Europe, so computer-controlled that the birds never see a human being, are rubbing their hands in delight over the EU cage ban.

Their industrial production makes such savings that it even pays some US producers to export eggs to Europe by jumbo jet. And in 12 years' time they will have the market for cheap eggs all to themselves. Some British producers may be able to survive by concentrating on more expensive "barn" and pseudo "free range" eggs. But most supermarket eggs will be from outside the EU. And there still won't be any reason in law why they shouldn't carry that reassuring, but meaningless, little lion.

'Even Newer Muckspreader'



SIGNAL FAILURES

Focus on London Underhand

LAST month the health and safety executive (HSE) was so appalled at Railtrack's inability to maintain its longest section of underground line (4.5 miles), it ordered a 20mph speed limit in the Severn tunnel.

But trifling factors like safety and incompetence have not stopped the government choosing Railtrack to manage huge chunks of the London Underground infrastructure – rather a lot of which is in tunnel.

Following the logic of the decision in 1997 that Great Western Trains deserved a franchise extension just weeks after the Southall rail crash had raised questions about its attitude to safety, the government clearly won't let the facts stand in the way of a good deal for the treasury.

A new report from Sheffield university shows that Railtrack now expects its rails to last 79 years – almost twice as long as British Rail or continental rail companies. It says: "The approach used by Railtrack with the Severn tunnel appears to be one of matching maintenance and renewal programmes to available capital. In this instance the approach has been flawed because of safety problems associated with rail breaks."

There are other pertinent facts about Railtrack – like its tolerating of degraded signal cables (*Eye* 977). Train delays caused by Railtrack were to reduce by 7.5 percent last year, but Railtrack managed just 2 percent; when the regulator demanded it make good the shortfall *and* meet this year's target of 7.5 percent Railtrack complained that the regulator was being "unreasonable".

If the government wanted more pointers to how Railtrack will manage LU lines it could have considered Railtrack's policy of increasingly patching up old components instead of renewing them; a rise in fatalities among trackside workers; and its insistence on rewarding itself for such appalling performance with fat profits (£428m last year) and dividends. "Passengers actually feel totally ripped off," said the chairman of the London Region Passengers' Committee.

If this company was the best bidder for the LU sub-surface lines (mainly Circle, District and Metropolitan), what does that say about the other bidders? Er... there weren't any. The trade magazine *New Civil Engineer* was told by one engineer: "The potential bidding consortia include contractors who rely on Railtrack for work and would be reluctant to bid against it for fear of putting future work at risk." Railtrack was therefore given a clear run, which implies poor value for public money.

John Prescott said that for the deep tube lines – where Railtrack cannot bid under the rules of this stitch-up – there was "considerable interest in the market so we have good reason to expect keenly priced bids"; this suggests the Railtrack sub-surface deal is not keenly priced.

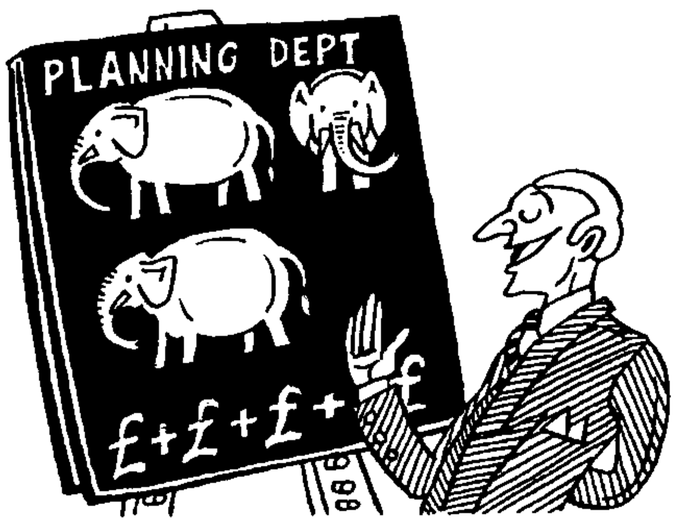
Passengers on the Circle and District lines have suffered exceptional disruption lately. The problems lie not in the structure of LU but in its under-funding – a situation likely to worsen as Railtrack sucks money out. The government reckons Railtrack has big money for investment but last autumn Railtrack warned that its borrowing "will be at a ceiling" with the Channel tunnel fast line and the London to Glasgow upgrade. Railtrack said: "Improving more routes will need more funding" – meaning more funding from outside.

The government must be embarrassed that its attempt to bring dynamic private companies into the LU system has led it to Railtrack instead. How else can one explain the cock-and-bull spin about the deal paving the way for through-services over LU lines and ex-BR lines? Such services have run for years west and north of London without common ownership of infrastructure. The scope for further through services is severely limited as the city-centre lines are already chock-a-block. Once again the government is expecting big improvements, including through trains from Heathrow to the City, for next to nothing.

Prescott's vision of suburban trains running through London was achieved in the 1980s when BR established Thameslink. Railtrack has owned this sub-surface railway through central London since 1994, when it inherited the Thameslink 2000 scheme for a more joined-up London. The Tory government paid Railtrack £800m for Thameslink 2000 in 1996 *(Eyes passim)* but Railtrack has yet to start work. Now the Labour government is placing its faith in that same Railtrack to modernise the LU surface lines. Such is progress.

'Dr B. Ching'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS



SEEING RED

WESTMINSTER council demonstrated its priorities last week when Tory councillors voted to spend £1.5m diverting thousands of vehicles away from posh, Tory-voting streets into humbler, Labour-voting ones by rearranging the borough's red routes.

At present traffic travelling north from Vauxhall Bridge towards Hyde Park and the West End is shared between Belgrave Road and Vauxhall Bridge Road. It is a far from satisfactory arrangement, but at least it is fair.

Now, in a scheme worthy of Dame Shirley Porter herself, Belgrave Road, which leads to Belgrave and Eaton squares, is to be removed from the red route network and given traffic calming measures such as a narrowed roadway and potted plants, while at least 400 cars an hour are diverted into Vauxhall Bridge Road and nearby Vincent Square.

Residents of Belgravia, such as Margaret Thatcher and Michael Howard, will see a decrease in traffic while the housing trust and council tenants who predominate in Vauxhall Bridge Road and Vincent Square will see... much more.

Prime movers behind the scheme are Tory councillors Alan Bradley, Christopher Malthouse and Alex Segal (see *Eye* 970). Bradley, who has property interests in the area, declared a pecuniary interest at last week's planning and transportation meeting and stood down for the crucial vote, although he sat at previous meetings where the subject was discussed. Though not on the committee, Segal, Westminster's new mayor, also has substantial interests in the area; and Malthouse lives in Churton street, off Belgrave Road.

By happy chance another beneficiary of the scheme will be the Duke of Westminster, whose Grosvenor Estate owns the choicest properties in Belgravia, which will now be effectively insulated from through traffic. Six years ago the duke resigned from the Tory party because of the introduction of the leasehold reform act 1993, and the party lost a huge financial contributor. Perhaps with the fillip to Belgravia prices the new scheme will bring, he may be persuaded to reconsider.

● **THERE was some surprise at Ascot last week to see Rodney-Hylton Potts in the Royal Enclosure. Her Majesty obviously cannot get enough of Potts since he has just been her guest for three years after a conviction for defrauding Scottish Banks of £217,000. Potts is most famous, of course, for his role in Lady Porter's Westminster Cemeteries scam (Eye 904), but he was never charged over it. Good to see Ascot is still such a classy event.**

POOL OF TALENT

ANYONE who wants a job in government which pays 25 per cent more than Tony Blair's should apply to become chief executive to Liverpool city council.

The year-old Lib Dem regime – pledged to cut costs, give "value for money" and introduce open and transparent government – has decided to hike the chief exec's pay by £27,000 to £130,000 a year. The task of recruiting such an "exceptional person" has been farmed out at great expense to consultants Price Waterhouse Coopers.

In a glossy brochure for applicants council leader Mike Storey talks of the city's "torrid past" and claims the job is not for the faint-hearted. Well, no, as the new boy or girl will be required to impose some £20m in cuts to jobs and services in the city with the highest council tax in the land (£1,171.54 pa for a band D house worth £68,000, for instance). Extremely generous "relocation expenses" are also offered to match the fat cat salary.

Storey's message is full of managementspeak about "service quality" and "beacons of excellence". Yet far from this move heralding a new Lib Dem dawn, it has a distinct feeling of déjà vu about it. Existing chief exec Peter Bounds, now being pensioned off, moved to Liverpool in 1990 and was given a £125,000 interest-free loan to buy a house in the posh area of Woolton. Another beneficiary of a previous head-hunting exercise was director of education Frank Cogley. He received a £200,000 interest-free loan to buy a house on the Wirral – so that he wouldn't have to send his son to a school in Liverpool. The loans to Bounds and Cogley were never made public until details were leaked to the *Eye* (772).

After a highly critical report from Ofsted on the running of his department, Cogley is expected to go in the shake up which will follow the appointment of the new chief exec. Not much value for money there!

"The Past, you know it and we know it... enough said," the job ad explains in an attempt to be humorous. But cynical scousers are already muttering: "Meet the new boss, same as the old boss!"

● **MORE news of the new puritanism sweeping Wales following Plaid Cymru's electoral triumphs last month. One of the first acts of Caerphilly council's new Plaid regime was to double councillors' allowances. New council leader Lindsay Whittle gets £15,000 a year, compared to just £8,000 for his Labour predecessor Graham Court. Committee chairs will get £9,000 in future, as against £4,000 before, and the basic allowance rises from £2,200 to £5,000. *Iechyd da – twll din pob Sais!* as some nationalists might say.***

EASTERN PROMISES

LABOUR-controlled city councils routinely use and abuse ambitious Asian politicians and give favours to local "community leaders" in exchange for their delivering the Asian vote at election time, according to an unusually frank assessment by... an ambitious Asian politician.

Shaukat Ahmed, a Bradford council member from 1991 until last month, says Labour has long used "gatekeepers" within the Asian community "to deliver support for the party in exchange for small favours/grants to voluntary groups, or just the illusion of self importance". He says that such "operators" along with local Asians keen to become councillors or MPs, have been given special treatment because of their perceived influence: "Even where they have broken the party rules we have ignored it because they were *our* gatekeepers."

The former councillor – who stood down in May – told a meeting of Bradford TUC that the city's Labour leadership had lost credibility by "milking and abusing" ethnic minority support while surrounding itself with "a small clique of cronies". He admitted that he and his fellow Asian politicians had been "a serious let-down for the community". Bradford voters, black and white, appear to agree, as Labour lost 10 seats in May – one of the worst results in the country.

● **BOOKED to appear at Bow Street magistrates' court next month is former Lewisham Lib Dem councillor Roy Stevens, who mysteriously quit earlier this year. Perhaps it was so that Stevens, a former member of the housing committee, could attend to charges of falsifying a housing benefit claim, which allegedly netted him £8,000 in 1997-8. If found guilty Stevens faces the possibility of sharing a prison cell with David Brown, Lewisham's former chair of housing. Brown is currently in the fourth month of a nine-month sentence from Bow Street Magistrates for, er, housing benefit fraud.**

**"Cheers — and arseholes to the English!"*

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Wheale Thomas Hodgins
recruitment advertisement

All cannabis activity became rigidly codified as unacceptable; it lost any status that it had established on the grid and any attempts at antidisestablishmentarianism were ignored.

NEIL MONTGOMERY
EDit (University of Edinburgh Mag)

THE AESTHETICS OF THE JAPANESE LUNCHBOX – Kenji Ekuan
The Makunouchi Bento, or traditional Japanese lunchbox, is a highly lacquered wooden box divided into quadrants, each of which contains different delicacies. It is also one of the most familiar images of Japan's domestic environment. When presented to the diner, the Japanese lunchbox seems straightforward enough; each of four food portions resides in its own compartment, apparently obeying a strict lunchbox geometry. So far, just food. But Kenji Ekuan reveals that a much deeper reading is possible, one that sees the lunchbox as nothing less than a key to an understanding of Japanese civilisation, the spirit of form, and the aesthetic ideal in which the many are reduced to one.

MIP Press 1999 Philosophy Catalogue

At dusk I like sitting on the bank of the Grand Canal, listening to the soft splashes of water against the ancient Venetian stones. It is then that I start seeing Venice as an ageing but still grateful woman, suffering from insomnia and shuffling restlessly around the house in her loose-fitting slippers in the night.

VITALI VATALIEV
Sunday Telegraph

As I left the ground, beaming foolishly, a fellow Spurs fan recognised me and waved cheerily in my direction. "Gawd bless yer, Salman," he yelled. I waved back, but I didn't say what I wanted to say: Nah, not Gawd, mate, he doesn't play for our team. Besides, who needs him when you've already got George Graham and David Ginola; when you're leaving Wembley Stadium with a win?

SALMAN RUSHDIE
New Yorker

***Lumpf* is one of the German words for shit; don't sculptors carve from *lumps* of stone, and take the formlessness of clay to make a man, a Golem? The German artist Joseph Beuys, in a further game with words and objects, places lumps of base matter – fat – on a chair. The multiple resonances of Beuys's fat chairs – with their allusions to energy and entropy, to the double meaning of the word *stool*, of bodes rendered into fat and soap, and the tendency of things, even humanity itself, to ultimately become formless – are finally tragic. Beuys's sculptures are abject, imperious and grand. They are among the few contemporary works that have made me cry.**

ADRIAN SEARLE
Guardian

CONTRIBUTORS: John V. Adams, Bruce McAdam, Richard Mason, John Summers, David French, Rev'd Dr Steven Shakespeare.

£10 paid for entries

Letters

Euro sceptics

Sir,

Erm, just a small point, but your Eye 978 cover tagline "£1 or 0.000012 euros" is surely a bit wrong. The euro is falling faster than Punch's circulation, so surely good old Sterling is worth MORE against the euro. "£1 or 120000 euros", now that would be a proper gag. Do be more careful in future.

Yours sincerely,
PETER SCOTT,

Via e-mail

Sir,

Forgive my preaching to the converters, so to speak, but your cover-page jibe over the ailing euro (Eye 978) might have worked better if your resident mathematicians had done their job properly. By my calculations, if the humble pound is equivalent to 0.000012 euros, then the euro must be worth something like 83 grand.

How ironic that, on page eight, you quipped that "education secretary David Blunkett's department has got its sums right." Perhaps you might consider asking him for some extra homework.

Five out of 10. Must try harder.

Sincerely,
DAVID MORROW,

London EC1.

● *Thanks for the* hundreds *of letters pointing out this mistake. Ed.*

Over the Hill

Sir,

James Tumbler is wrong to chastise you (Letters, 978) over earlier remarks about Jimmy Hill. Hill, a former head of sport for London Weekend Television, was indeed a pundit on that company's show The Big Match before being lured over to the BBC and Match of the Day in the early 1970s. Square Eyes (Eye 977) did get one fact wrong, though. It was as a replacement linesman, and not as a referee, that Jimmy Hill once featured in a football match that he was covering for ITV.

Yours sportingly,
SIMON COWARD,

Dudley, W. Midlands.

● *Thanks too for the equal number of letters on this vital subject. Ed.*

Bones of contention

Sir,

Further to the Irish wolfhound cartoon (Eye 978). The cartoon will draw complaints of "ethnic" stereotyping, racial disparagement and complete insensitivity; in other words it was rather funny. Please send Mo Mowlam a copy.

Yours faithfully,
MR R.J. DODD,

Warrington.

Wolverhampton wonderers

Sir,

Fascinated to read in Eye 978 Street of Shame that Wolverhampton NE Labour MP Ken Purchase needs the services of Ian Burton as a House of Commons researcher because of the "big car factory" in his constituency. This will be welcome news to Wolverhampton's unemployed who had been fooled into believing that the bus, truck, car and motorcycle companies of this town are to be seen only in black and white photographs of yesteryear.

Where is this factory? I think we should be told. There is Goodyear's tyres but I have never thought of them as a car manufacturer.

BRYAN LEWIS,

Wolverhampton.

Lookalike

Edward and Sophie

Bookends

Sir,

Has anyone else noticed the uncanny resemblance between the new Edward and Sophie stamp, and the cover photograph on Simon and Garfunkel's 1968 Bookends album? One of them, I seem to remember, was a successful couple who ended up hating each others' guts...

Yours,
MARK DAWSON,

St Clement, Jersey.

Pisspoor ambitions

Sir,

The Scottish Liberal Democrats would warmly welcome many more "pisspoor showings" (HP Sauce, Eye 978) like that on 6 May when we:

successfully held all our Westminster seats;
won Aberdeen South from Labour;
secured an MSP in every Scottish region;
increased our share of the vote compared with the 1997 general election;
won a record number of council seats;
made more net gains than any other party in the council elections.

We are really sorry that we did not emulate the spectacular results of Labour and the Conservatives whose share of the votes cast were both down on 1997; or the SNP who failed to reach their rock bottom minimum target of 40 seats.

Please don't in future pass on as gospel to your readers all the misinformation you glean from the increasingly awful Scotsman newspaper.

Yours faithfully,
DR DEREK A. BARRIE,

Campaigns Officer, Scottish Liberal Democrats.

Crime pays

Sir,

It was an unpleasant shock to see the unethical advertisement you were running on the first page of issue 978.

I see that the police regularly sell "unclaimed lost, stolen and recovered possessions... Aladdin's Caves... cheaper than you could from the criminals". Bargain hunters are alerted in a most distasteful way to the possibility of snapping up other people's property at knock down prices. It is all the more sickening that there are over 1,000 sales every month.

You may well have covered this issue before in Private Eye, but as someone whose elderly relatives had their entire house cleared of its valuables by burglars — including furniture — I would like to point out that the police do not exactly make strenuous efforts to reunite owners with their property. Nor are different branches aware of arrests made in neighbouring areas for similar offences they may currently be investigating.

There is no central record of stolen items. In a computer age this is just outrageous. Guildford police, for example, will have no idea that the haul of valuable antiques they have recovered was actually stolen 10 miles down the A3 in Kingston. Unless the items are stolen and recovered in the same administrative area, there is no chance that you will find your property at an "Aladdin's Cave" show.

I would be delighted if you gave the same amount of space that you gave this advertisement to highlighting the inadequacies of the policing which enable these unsavoury auctions to take place.

Yours faithfully,
PAULINE HOWARD,

New Malden, Surrey.

The Pennie drops...

Sir,

Re: Suspension of Ms Pennie Pennie — London Borough of Lambeth Social Services.

The council wishes to point out that your coverage of the suspension of the above named senior manager in Lambeth's social services department may mislead your readers in regard to any connection being drawn with the inquiry into a specific case of alleged child abuse by John Barrett and the major investigation into child abuse generally being conducted by Ms Kenward.

There is no connection between Ms Pennie Pennie and any allegations connected to child abuse. The suspension, which is precautionary, arises from a statement of concern by John Barrett to the council's chief executive in regard to the current management of the children and families civision.

Arising from receipt of these concerns, the chief executive set up an independent investigation into the issues raised by John Barrett, and Ms Pennie Pennie was suspended because of her position as the senior manager of that division.

The acting executive director has written to all social services employees to advise them "any assertion... that suggests a direct link between Pennie Pennie and child abuse is entirely incorrect".

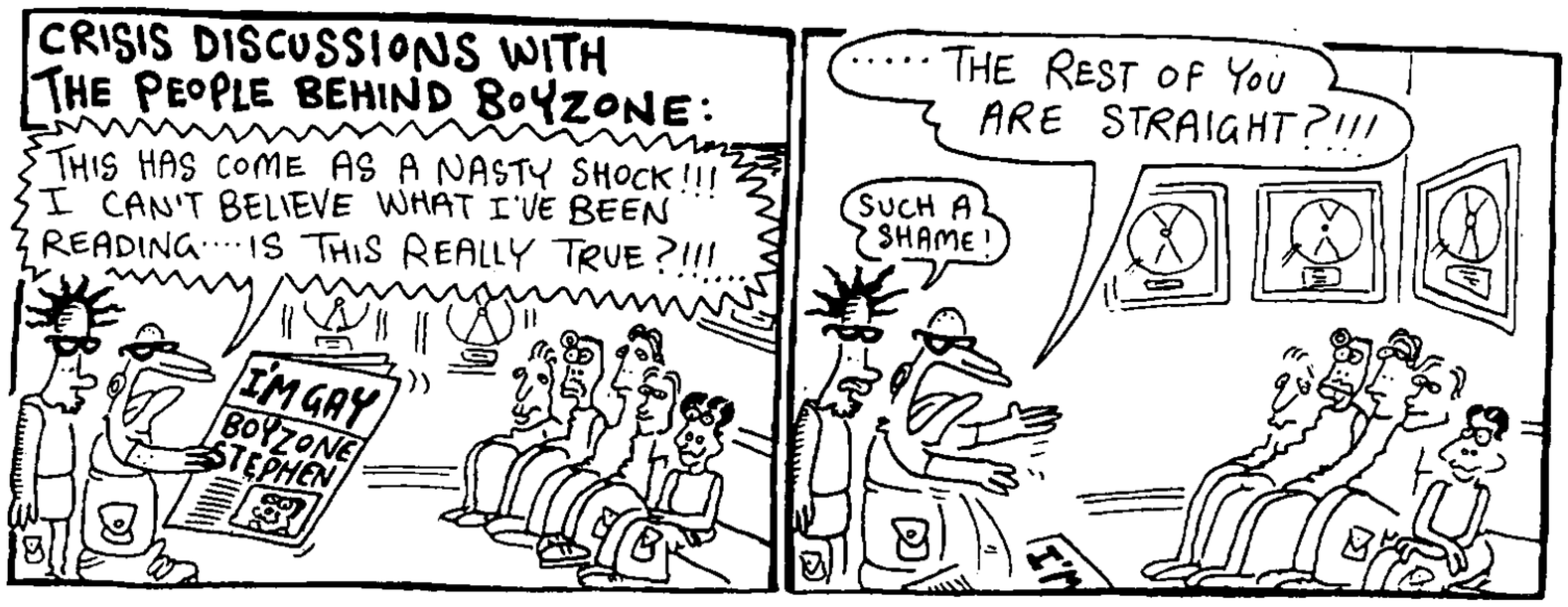
I should be grateful if you would print this letter so that your readers may be aware of this clarification.

Yours sincerely,
JAMES DALGLEISH,

Head of Lambeth Human Resources.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER


CRISIS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PEOPLE BEHIND BOYZONE:
THIS HAS COME AS A NASTY SHOCK!!! I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT I'VE BEEN READING····IS THIS REALLY TRUE?!!!
I'M GAY BOYZONE STEPHEN
·····THE REST OF YOU ARE STRAIGHT?!!!
SUCH A SHAME!

24 is 20/20

Sir,

You refer to BBC News 24 in your article (28 May) as "diabolical": from a viewer's point of view far less diabolical than CNN or Sky News, which intersperse snippets of news with so many adverts that, to avoid the barrage of trivia, one misses essential news items. BBC News 24 is therefore a great relief to those whose concentration span exceeds that of the mayfly.

Yours sincerely,
JEREMY MENUHIN,

London NW5.

I-SPY

Munich

Submitted by I. Lee. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Mozart *Piano Concerto No 20 in D minor, K466*
Clifford Curzon, ECO, conducted by the Composer

Radio Times

Cole comfort

Sir,

Your version of the letter sent to me by Inspector Knacker differs from the one I actually received.

It is hardly surprising that no further action was taken as no evidence could be found that the disputed election leaflet in Winchester had actually misled a single elector.

Yours etc,
HARVEY R. COLE,

Winchester, Hants.

Lookalike

Hannibal

Terrier

Sir,

Some of your readers may care to note the startling similarity between the popular screen anti-hero and star of Silence of the Lambs Hannibal Lecter, as portrayed by Mr Anthony Hopkins, and Tammy, my mother's West Highland Terrier.

Not being overly familiar with young people's cinema, I presume Mr Lecter also suffers from a painful ear infection which tends to make him snap a little at his fellow creatures. I think we should be told and will notify you promptly of any impending sequel.

Yours sincerely,
ARNOLD VERRAL,

London E10.

Pieces of stringer

Sir,

On the outside chance that the BBC has not leaped to her defence, can I suggest you've been unjust to Jacky Rowland in your piece about BBC corrs increasing their income by writing for newspapers. John Simpson, Ben Brown, fair game — but Jacky is not, as you suggest, a general BBC hackette.

She's what they call a sponsored stringer — a BBC cost saving measure to reduce the number of overseas bureaux. They are placed somewhere that the newsroom reckons isn't newsworthy, paid a totally inadequate retainer, and make up a more-or-less living salary by scratching the odd report from unpromising territory. These posts are always uncomfortable and often dangerous, if only because of the local crime rate — some stringers find themselves in warzones, but still unable to make money because those who are dying are black rather than white. If they're lucky, they end up somewhere London has decided is newsworthy, and they make a decent living, maybe even get enough of a name to be treated like the experienced foreign correspondents most of them are — Jacky's reported from Bosnia, the Middle East and North Africa. But most of the time, their only reward is to have a relatively interesting if impoverished life and, as part of the deal, to be allowed to scratch a bit more of a living by selling stories to newspapers after they've filed for the BBC. So she's entirely within her rights to file for newspapers.

NAME AND ADDRESS
WITHHELD.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Once again our consistency has been proved to be inconsistent."
DAVID GRAVENEY, Radio 5 Live
(Martyn Smith)

"Sampras, all in white, serves with his baggy shorts."
IAN CARTER, Radio 5 Live
(Stuart Pritchard)

"Zimbabwe have done well, just as it looked as though the horse had left the stable and gone galloping down the road, they managed to put a chain on the door."
PETER BAXTER, Radio 4
(Russ Green)

"...it's a difficult catch to take, especially when you're running away from the ball."
Commentator, Sky Sports
(Dean Wrigley)

Alex Lester: *Got any children?*
Contestant: *No.*
Alex Lester: *Grandchildren?*
Contestant: *No!*
BBC Radio 2
(Stuart Glassbrook)

"If you gave Arsene Wenger eleven players and told him to pick his team, this would be it."
ANDY GRAY, Sky Sports One
(Chris Harrison)

HOM SAP
AUSTIN
I BOUGHT ONE OF YOUR BOOKS..
ALL BOOKS 10% OFF
.. AND THERE ARE LOTS OF PAGES MISSING.
THAT'S THE TEN PERCENT.
ALL BOOKS 10% OFF

Letter From **Britain and Iran**
from Our Own Correspondent

STUDENTS of Robin Cook's "ethical" foreign policy might meditate on the strange conduct of the Charity Commission towards Iran Aid, a north London-based charity set up to provide humanitarian aid for the families of victims of the Iranian regime.

It is now nearly a year since, for reasons it has never specified, the commission sent in Francis Runacres, a receiver manager from Pricewaterhouse Coopers, to take over the charity's affairs. He immediately suspended the flow of aid on which thousands of women and children depended for their livelihoods.

Eleven months later Mr Runacres is still there, having taken more than £100,000 of the charity's funds for his services. And still, despite repeated requests from Iran Aid's distinguished band of British supporters – who include a former high court judge, an Oxford history professor and a former head of the Charity Commission's own legal department – neither Mr Runacres nor the commission has offered a single coherent reason Iran Aid's activities should have been stopped in this extraordinary fashion.

Part of the explanation for this bizarre story may lie in the fact that, in July last year, only days before the commission sent in its receiver manager, there were newspaper reports, obviously based on a foreign office briefing, that Britain intended to open up new, more friendly relations with hugely oil-rich Iran, even though it still enjoys one of the more tyrannical regimes in the world.

On 20 July the late Derek Fatchett, minister of state at the foreign office, announced that Britain would launch a "crackdown" on Iranian dissident groups in London. Three days later the commission sent in Mr Runacres to take over the running of Iran Aid. He immediately froze all its charitable operations and seized £97,000 of donors' money for his services. The only explanation offered was that unspecified "complaints" had been made about the charity by two unnamed sources. On 24 July Teheran Radio announced that the British Government had closed down the offices of the "mujahideen" in London.

On 30 July Iranian officials visiting London negotiated a $2bn credit line with the British government. The following day the Voice of America reported "signs of improvement in relations between Britain and Iran", referring to the closure of Iran Aid. On 10 August British Airways announced the restarting of direct flights between London and Teheran, although insisting that Salman Rushdie would not be allowed on any BA flight. And on 14 and 15 September a secret "oil summit" in London was attended by 120 representatives of British-based oil companies, Iran's state oil company and British government officials.

Contracts worth tens of billions of dollars were discussed, by companies including BP, Shell and British Gas (Shell later announced a $2.5bn oil deal). At the same time officials of the British and Iranian foreign ministries discussed upgrading their diplomatic links to ambassadorial level after a 20-year freeze, which has since taken place.

When it came to light recently that there were worrying intelligence links to the story and indeed that the two anonymous "sources" of the original complaints against Iran Aid were themselves linked to Iranian intelligence, a storming letter of protest to the Charity Commission went off from the Friends of Iran Aid. They asked the commission either to come up with evidence to justify its actions or leave Iran Aid to proceed freely with its humanitarian activities. Their letter has still had no reply, but meanwhile British-based multinationals are now enjoying contracts with Iran worth billions of pounds.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

"The beer bottle was lodged deep inside Mr Lopez's rectum," surgeon Reiniery Jimenez of San Pedro Sula hospital told a press conference in Honduras. "In fact, the neck was stuck in his large intestine. We only discovered it when we X-rayed him, and although we tried to massage it back down through his colon, we finally had to remove it by cutting through his abdomen, and bringing it out through his lower stomach. We still can't figure out why it rose that high, instead of descending."

Jose Lopez, a Honduran fisherman, was equally unable to shed light on

recent events when he spoke to reporters. "I suppose it must have got there about two weeks ago. I was out alone in the fields one night drinking aguardiente, and after about two quarts I passed out. When I woke up next morning, I felt something strange inside me, which gave me some pain and prevented me from defecating, but I didn't know what it was. It felt like being pregnant, because I could feel something moving up and down inside me when I walked or changed my position. The strangest thing is that I don't drink beer. I don't like it. Still, the surgeon told me that there is money back on the bottle, so it's not all bad news." *(The Jakarta Post, 10/5/99. Spotter: Richard Brock)*

—●—

● "Look, it's not so much that we're interested in women's Sumo," the owner of the Kabukicho club in Tokyo's Shinjuku-ku district told reporters, "but there's about a hundred massage parlours located near to us, so we have to offer something a little out of the ordinary. And a lot of men enjoy wrestling against a topless female opponent, and will pay handsomely for the privilege. That's why Sumo Play is becoming Japan's fastest-growing sport."

But one of the club's leading female wrestlers, Miyu Fukko, was less than enthusiastic. "It's so embarrassing, having to wear just a loincloth. It's more perverted than wearing nothing at all. The loincloth's not much bigger than a piece of string, and it's always getting caught between my cheeks. I'm only doing this for the money, and even though I'm a grand champion, I don't really have a clue about Sumo. I just stand there while the men wrestle me to the floor, or slap my chest."

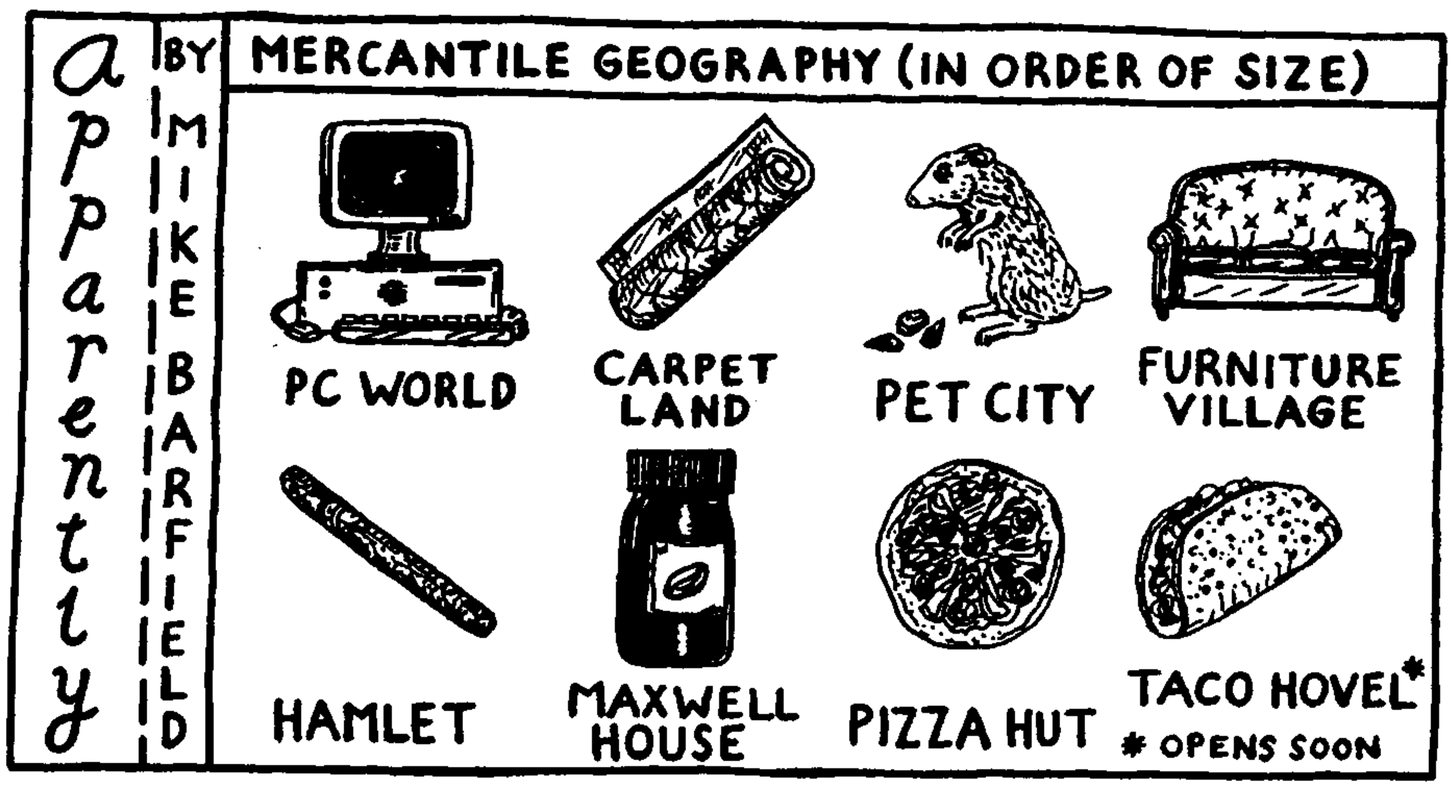
Her colleague Michuru was equally underwhelmed. "This club made its name as the massage parlour where the women didn't have any pubic hair. Clients used to get a good, close look, and we didn't mind. We all knew where we were. But now we're dressed in this ridiculous loincloth, the men stare at us for ages while we oil ourselves, and then they just wrestle us out of the ring. Sumo Play? You can stick it up your dirt box, as my granny used to say." *(Yomuri Staibon Newspaper, 20/10/98. Spotter: Tom Whitwell)*

—●—

● *"A man is regarded only as a real man by his wife if he is capable of bulldozing her sexually in bed. Whoever you are, as a man, if you cannot go more than one round of sex with your wife, you are bound to lose your self-respect before her. A lot of men today have become impotent due to spiritual attack, but Alhaji Qumas is a natural healer and master palmist who can solve your problems. Listen to this tale, and wonder.*

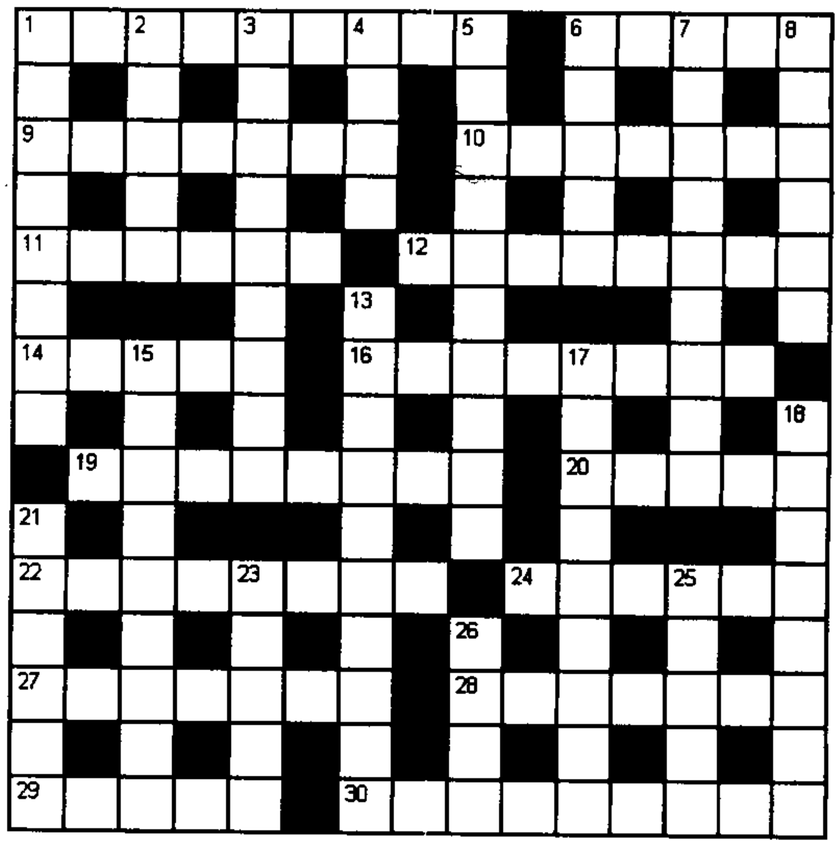
A young man called Tubosun became impotent and avoided sex with his fiancée for two years, until she became worried and dragged him to Qumas' office for help. When Qumas checked Tubosun's palm, he discovered that his nymphomaniac landlady was responsible for his problem. The sex-hungry woman had used her charm to kill Tubosun's manhood after the young man rejected her several love advances. Qumas treated Tubosun and he regained his potency in weeks. After treatment, when Tubosun made love to his girlfriend, she was so surprised at his utility that she nicknamed him 'Mr Bulldozer', meaning that he was very good in bed.

You too can turn into a bulldozer before your wife. Just contact QUMAS PALMISTRY, 44 SHYLLON STREET, ILE-ISE, BUSSTOP, ILUPEJU, PALMGROVE, LAGOS. Warts, verrucas, piles, scabs on eyes, lumps and brain tumours also treated. We always massage." (Advertisement in Temp (Nigeria), 27/5/99. Spotter: Tony Moggach)



EYE CROSSWORD 134

by Cyclops — *£100 prize*



ACROSS

1 As Spooner would have it, do make an effort to bonk Robin's all-round confidant (5,4)
6 Leader making bloody long appearance (5)
9 First woman possesses a hint of Kosovan, perhaps (7)
10 Fervent, trendy Tony's first seen to be ruffled (7)
11/23 Labour's star MP screwed gals good according to our hackette (6,5)
12 Clinton's place to get rid of far from red-blooded politicians collectively (3,5)
14 Copper enters you just at the right moment (2,3)
16 Made to go topless in traditional royal style and climax with Sophie finally in the sack (8)
19 Congress may be bought in this shady US-style house (8)
20 Come, a little amusement (5)
22 Brown-nosing in bathrobe is antisocial (8)
24 (see 1 dn.)
27 Loo can break down after five – liable to produce an outburst (7)
28 United Nations and Nato leaders equipped with weapons (no reverse and lacking a handle) (7)
29 Put it about 70s style? Go hang! (5)
30 What's in store for the barren old goat, really? (2,7)

DOWN

1/24 Grope kindly, with consideration – what incumbent politicians hoping to be re-elected need? (4-4,6)
2 Maggie's flipping no good as an icon (5)
3 No friend of royalty gets drinks for all present before oral sex (9)
4 Dog-eared American hack (4)
5 It entitles board member to mount Robin (10)
6 Bishop has lust for cow (5)
7 August's leader, *Sun*: "Mad EU fiasco going sickeningly on and on" (2,7)
8 Joint is main obstacle mounting Brenda (6)
13 Familiar President who exited theatrically (3,7)
15 Ouch! Neil a terrible ex-leader (4,2-3)
17 Declined to vote for adulterous Bill initially – before what he did to Monica's dress (9)
18 Not the done thing, screwing if in drag (5,3)
21 Footballers love getting tossed in two directions (6)
23 (see 11)
25 Times: "Politician wearing incorrect tie" (5)
26 Joke: King is a thug (4)

£100 prize to first solution opened on 2.7.99. Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 133

Winner: SALLY BESWICK

ACROSS: 1 Franc 4 Cupid's bow 9 (see 17) 10 Recruit 11 Trial by jury 12 DoE 13 Pensioner 15 Lords 16 Tight 18 Reshuffle 22 Act 23 Nato bombing 24 On order 25 Routine 26 Mercenary 27 Hosed

DOWN: 1 Felt-tip 2 Anglian 3 Civil List 4 Carry on 5 Pursuer 6 Dicky 7 Bounder 8 Witness 14 Eye 15 Loud-mouth 16 Tearoom 17/9 Get your leg over 18 Rotorua 19 Soberly 20 Fairies 21 Egghead 23 Nudge

HOST OF CELEBRITIES CHEER ROYAL PAIR ON

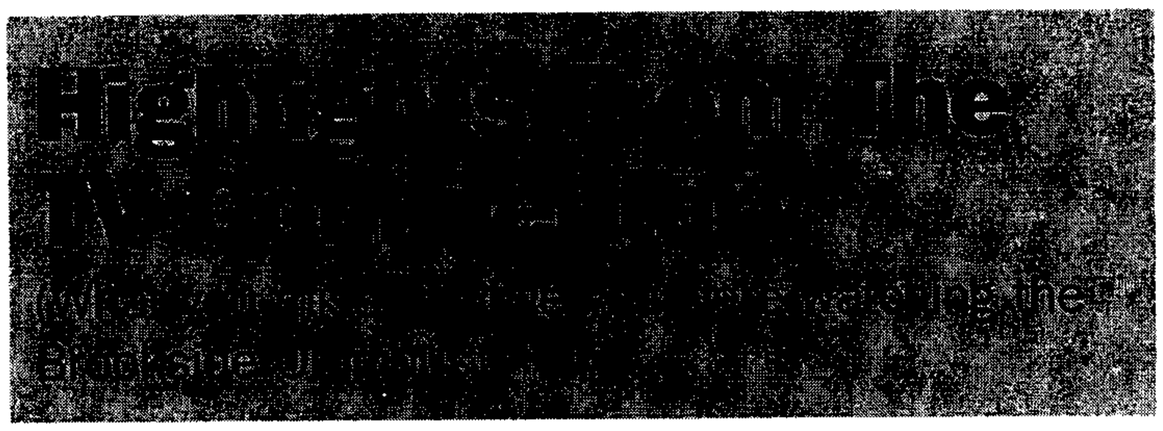
by BBC's Royal Correspondent **Jenny Flect**

A GLITTERING array of stars from the world of show-business were nowhere to be seen on Sophie and Edward's big day.

Instead, there was Sir David Frost, the host of TV's Sunday morning "Everyone's Still In Bed Show"; Screaming Lord Webber, composer and chairman of the Really Useless Group who first employed Edward as a Tea Bag Consultant; and E.R. Thatsit the Producer of "It's A Royal Cock-Up" in 1981.

That show was to be Edward's introduction to the glamorous business of tea-making (*Surely "entertainment"? Ed.)* and starred such famous people as Billy Connolly, John Travolta, Stuart Hall and the Duchess of York.

Sadly, none of them could make it to the wedding and amongst others who were not present either were Madonna, Tom Cruise, Monica Lewinsky, Hugh Grant, Mike Tyson, Gwyneth Paltrow, Tina Brown, Barbara Streisand, Sir Paul McCartney, Leonardo DiCaprio and Elvis Presley.



Sue Barking *(for it is she)*: ...and there is the bride's mother, a commoner, and it would be hard to imagine anyone commoner than that...

Michael Buerking: Oh, come on, Sue, that's a bit unfair.

Sue Barking: Never can this former secretary have imagined that one day her daughter would find herself side-by-side with Sir David Frost and Andrew Lloyd Webber...

Michael Buerking: ...and isn't it a pleasure to see how informal and relaxed everyone is... and now a fanfare by the massed trumpeters of the Queen's Own Buglers Poursuivant dressed in their splendid livery.

Sue Barking: Yes, they're standing informally to attention in a lovely relaxed row awaiting Her Majesty the Queen...

Michael Buerking: Looking very relaxed... what a lovely touch, Sue, she's wearing a very relaxed hat.

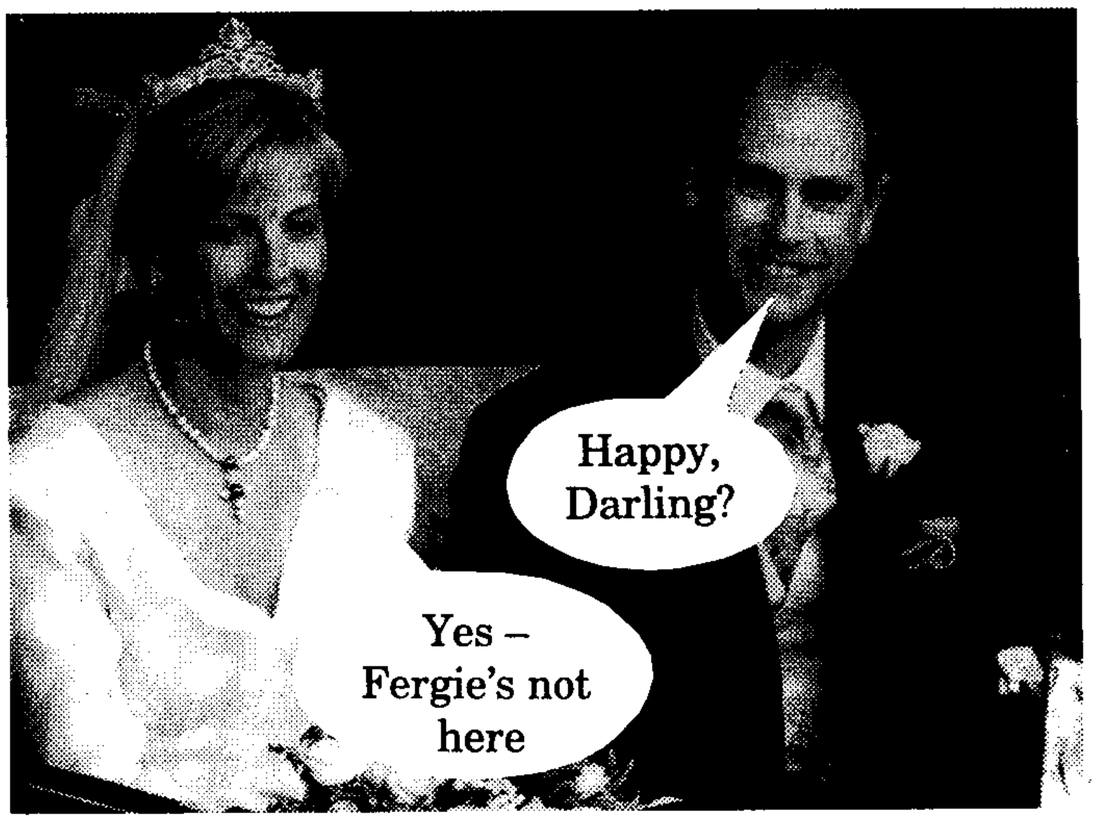
Sue Barking: Yes, Michael, carrying a very informal handbag.

Michael Buerking: Probably the most informal handbag ever carried at a Royal Wedding...

Sue Barking: ...and what a relief that the rain has held off for this important day as the Duke of Edinburgh prepares to serve for the match.

Umpire: Quiet please.

(Continued Court 94)



THAT DRESS IN FULL

by Our Fashion Correspondent
Princess Alexandra of Shulman

IT WAS the dress that stole the show. A daring symphony of texture and colour which upstaged every other frock in the chapel.

Make no mistake about it, the assembled guests only had eyes for the Bishop of Norwich. This flaming red silk and satin chasuble with matching heavily embroidered stole had fashion correspondents gasping.

Praise My Stole The King Of Heaven

It was designed by Mrs Fiona Dunwoody, 68, and her team of lady helpers from the Norwich WI.

"I saw the material in John Lewis and I thought to myself that it would be perfect for the Bishop on her big " she said.

The high street shops are already experiencing huge demands for copy-cat vestments and there can be no doubt what the best-dressed vicars will be wearing this summer.

Said a spokesman for High Street fashion giants *World of Chasubles*, "We have been inundated by a phone call from Rev Peabody in Nuneaton already." *(Cont. p. 94)*

How To Remember Those Royal Brides
by Henry VIII

Divorced
Divorced
Divorced

Divorced
Divorced
Survived (so far)

Old Snob Writes

THE TITLE of the Earl of Wessex dates back to 738 AD when the Kingdom of Wessex was ruled over by King Egcup. When the Kingdom merged with the Fiefdom of Fergia in 872 the title became that of hereditary Thane held in the gift of the new Monarch of Middle England King Nobert the Daft (related to Prince Edward through his niece Queen Grunhilde von Liebfraumilch).

The title fell into desuetude for several centuries, but was revived by Prince Albert when it was bestowed on his 18th son, the Duke Duke of Earl, on the occasion of his marriage to Princess Petra von Schmeichel in 1837.

The Queen's imaginative gesture in reviving this ancient title is to be commended, signalling as it does the Queen's ambition to take the Monarchy forward into the eleventh century.

© *Old Snob, The Telegraph Group*

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

Thank you for all your messages of congratulations on our historic victory in Europe! I hope in due course to be able to thank each one of you personally for supporting the firm line I took over Kosovo.

I must emphasise, of course, that this was not just a vindication of everything I have been saying all along. No, this was a triumph for peace and humanity, and I am very proud to have been the one who recognised this, when a lot of other people seemed to lack the appropriate faith!

I am reminded of the words of the New Testament, "There is more rejoicing in heaven over the one just man than over ninety-nine who get it completely wrong" *(Parable of the Sheep and the Gloats).*

The last thing I want to do is to make a big song and dance over this victory. So I have decided to hold a low-key two-hour long Service of Thanksgiving, with singing and dancing, with street parties throughout the parish, followed by bonfires.

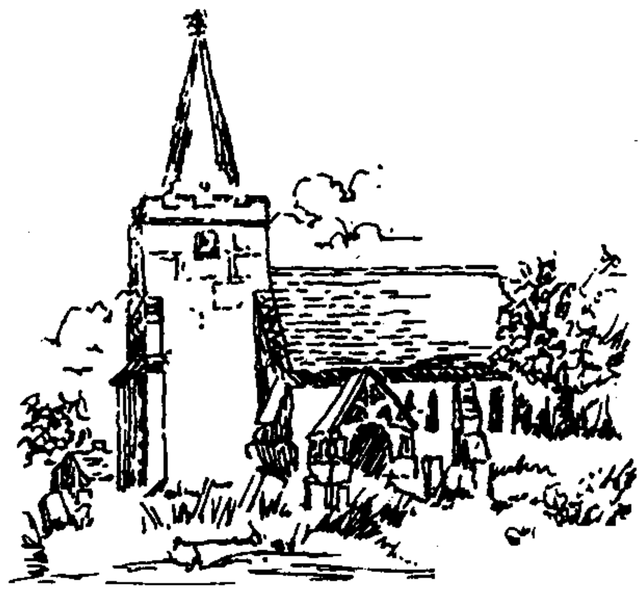
There will be a half-day holiday for all St Albion's schools, and we shall also have special day-long pealing of the church bells, organised by members of the St Albion's Campanology Society led by Mr Smith and his partner.

Apart from these few informal events, it would be inappropriate to go over the top in marking this wonderful victory for the forces of good over evil, but I hope you will all join me at the fireworks' display which we are holding on the recreation ground.

NB. The PCC will accept no responsibility for any "collateral damage" caused to persons or property by any fireworks which go astray.

Is it surprising, in view of the part I had to play in this great drama on the world stage, that I have inevitably had not as much time as I would have liked for more trivial matters, such as the recent PCC elections for our oecumenical European liaison sub-committee.

The fact that almost no one in the parish bothered to vote is surely a sign that the vast majority of parishioners are so happy with the way we are running the parish that they preferred



to enjoy the summer sunshine (not that we've had much of it!) or watch the very entertaining cricket competition which has been showing on the television.

It would be obviously inappropriate to devote any space in the Parish News to the behaviour of a member of the St Albion's Sixth Form Debating Soceity, but we must all have been shocked by the recent antics of young Master William Hague.

To describe him as "smug", "cocky" and "far too pleased with himself" would be unfair, though true. And he may well regret that, in trying to win cheap, short-term popularity with the old people of the parish, he has said so many silly things.

I am certainly not going to descend to his level of personal abuse, but I can only suggest that he would command more respect if he bought himself a good wig!

Yours in triumph!

Tony

Thanks to...

Mrs Beckett for the wonderful job she did in organising the recent PCC elections. She has earned herself a good long rest after all her hard work, and will enjoy her early retirement. Perhaps she can spend it on holiday in her caravan, as she did during the most important week in the run-up to the elections. Thanks a bundle, Margaret! T.B.

Parish Postbag...

Dear Vicar,

Since I was forced to resign as Churchwarden due to circumstances beyond my control, it is quite clear that the running of the parish has been an unmitigated disaster.

While I am second to none in my admiration for my successor Mr Cunningham, I am sure everyone now recognises that he is utterly useless, as is Mrs Beckett and everyone else who has been trying to do my old job. Surely it is time for a concerted campaign to call for the reinstatement of the only person in the parish who knows how to run things properly. Modesty forbids that I should name that person, but I am sure your readers will have no difficulty in identifying the man I have in mind!

Yours faithfully,
P. Mandelson
(Ex-Churchwarden 1997-1999)
Address Withheld.

The Editor reserves the right to print in full all letters written at the suggestion of the Vicar. A. Campbell, Ed.

Notices

■ The Millennium Tent is absolutely on schedule and, thanks to generous recent sponsorship from the local business community, we have been able to complete the previously designated "Religion" Zone. This will now focus on the important spiritual values common to everyone in St Albion's and will be renamed "The Money Zone".

■ The Vicar will *personally* be coaching the St Albion's Boys Cricket First XI on the green. He is very worried about declining standards in sports and wants all the boys to get in as much practise as possible – before the green is sold to his friend Mr Walmart for one of his exciting new supermarkets.

Parish Discussion Groups

Wednesday. Mr Darling will give us a short talk on the need for a compassionate answer to the tragic problem of our teenage mothers – *"Lock Up The Lazy Slappers And Withdraw Their Benefits: Is it the only language they understand?"*

Friday. Mr Straw on *"Does Marriage Have Any Place In The Swinging St Albion's Of Today?"* Do come along and bring your same-sex partner or "significant other". Or just come on your own – there's nothing wrong with single people! T.B.

YES! IT'S HAGUEMANIA

by Our Tennis Correspondent **Sue Barking**

THE WHOLE country's gone mad over Tim Hagueman – the dashing all-English star with the whiplash delivery and the blonde on his arm.

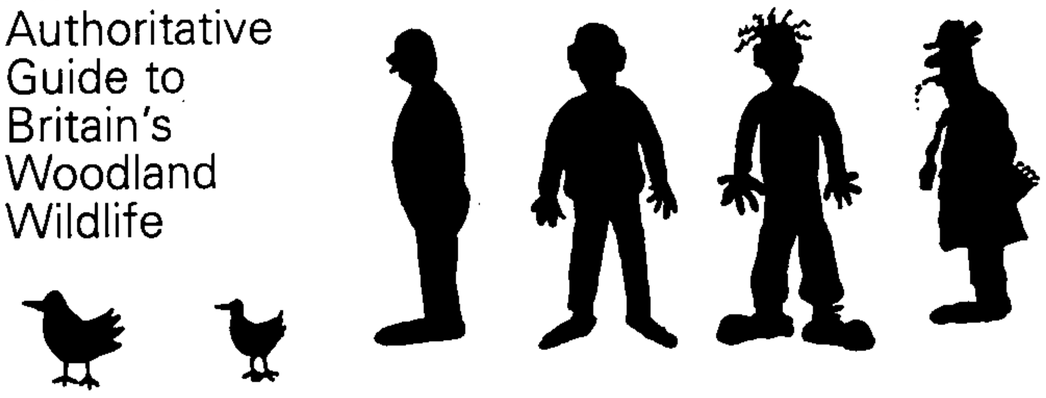
After his sensational performance in the Brussels Open hopes are high that Hagueman can go all the way to No. 10 Court and win on his home territory.

Hagueman's camp claim that his erratic form is behind him and he is now seeded well above Paddy Ashdown, Alex Salmond and the late Screaming Lord Sutch.

But can Hagueman really lift his game to take on the world's number one politician, "Pistol Tony" Blair? No.

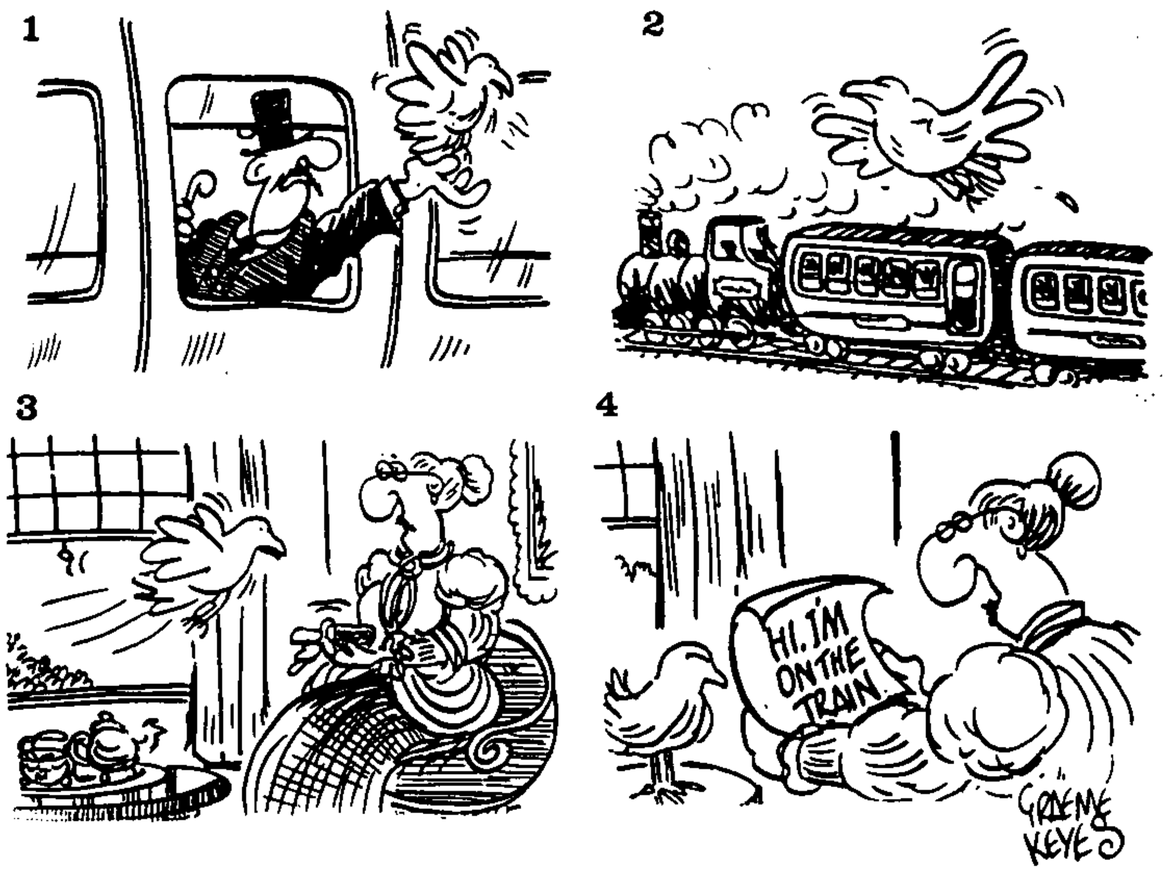
THE RON DAVIES BOOK OF BIRD WATCHING

An Authoritative Guide to Britain's Woodland Wildlife



Thrush | Sparrow | Robin | Simon | Winston | Reporter from the News of The World

THE AGE OF STEAM



FOR USE IN ALL SCHOOLS

Core Curriculum

GCSE SEX EDUCATION Module 94

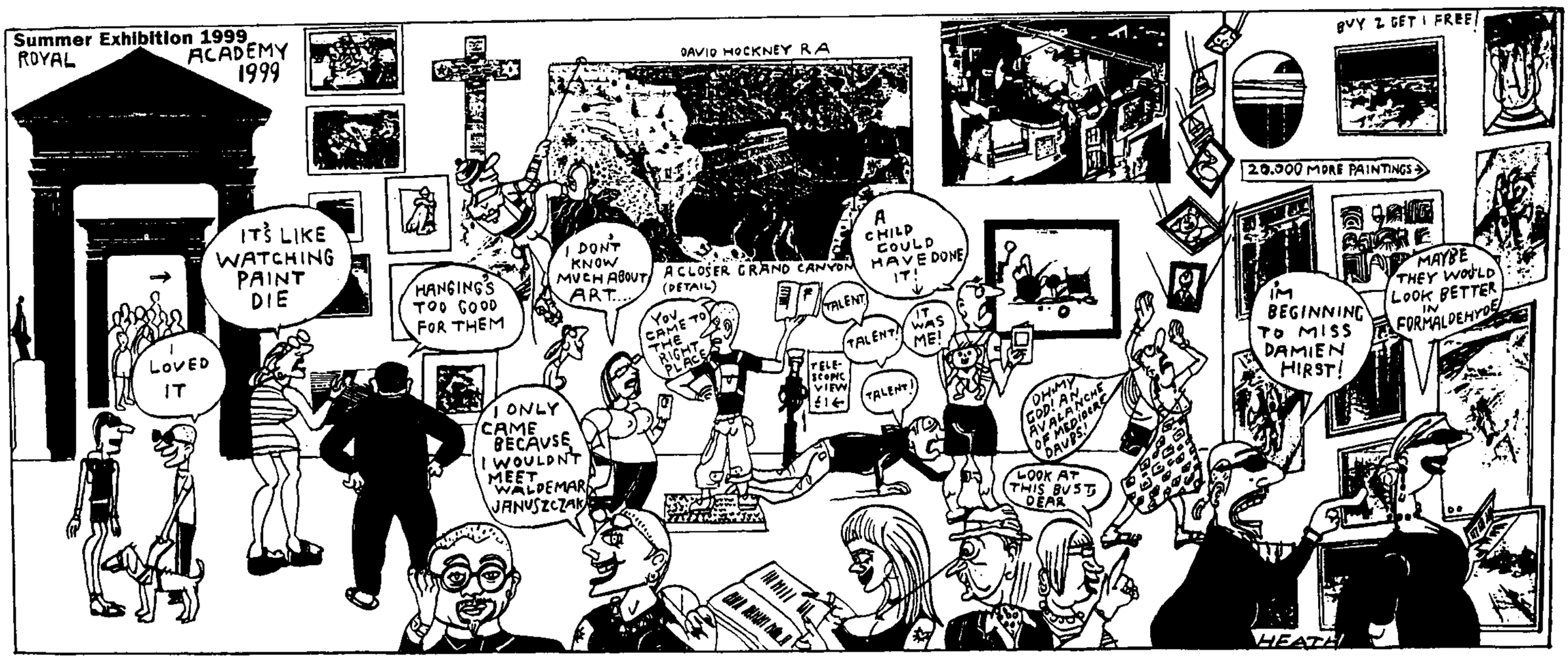
❶ What do you get if you have sex?
a) A council house
b) Child Benefit
c) Time off school.

❷ Safe sex is:
a) Sex with someone over sixteen
b) Sex with someone in the toilets when the teachers aren't around
c) Watching Channel 5 when your parents have gone to bed.

❸ To avoid having a baby should you:
a) Have sex with someone of the same gender?
b) Have an abortion?
c) Vote Labour?

(That's enough sex. Ed.)

HEATH'S PRIVATE VIEW


Summer Exhibition 1999
ROYAL ACADEMY 1999
DAVID HOCKNEY RA
A CLOSER GRAND CANYON (DETAIL)
BUY 2 GET 1 FREE!
20,000 MORE PAINTINGS
I LOVED IT
IT'S LIKE WATCHING PAINT DIE
HANGING'S TOO GOOD FOR THEM
I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT ART...
I ONLY CAME BECAUSE I WOULDN'T MEET WALDEMAR JANUSZCZAK
YOU CAME TO THE RIGHT PLACE
TELESCOPIC VIEW £1
TALENT
TALENT!
TALENT!
IT WAS ME!
A CHILD COULD HAVE DONE IT!
OHMMY GOD! AN AVALANCHE OF MEDIBEARE DAUBS!
LOOK AT THIS BUST DEAR
I'M BEGINNING TO MISS DAMIEN HIRST!
MAYBE THEY WOULD LOOK BETTER IN FORMALDEHYDE
HEATH

NURSERY TIMES

FRIDAY JUNE 25 1999

"I DON'T WANT A FAIRYTALE WEDDING," says Snow White

by Our Royal Correspondent
Humpty Dumpster

SNOW WHITE has defied tradition and opted for a low-key wedding to Prince Charming. Ms White has decided to keep her own name rather than become Princess Charming and will carry on with her successful career as a dwarf consultant.

"I will obviously support my husband in his work as the managing director of Charming Productions, but I see no reason why this marriage should stop me both whistling and working in the dwarf field."

Ms White continued: "I will not be another Cinderella. No one can replace Cinders as a national icon and I am not going to try."

Ms White then told waiting reporters from the Nursery Times pool, "We are hoping to avoid the pitfalls of previous fairytale weddings and to live happily ever after."

ON OTHER PAGES

- Raunchy Pictures Of Snow White's Apples p. 2
- My Night In The Forest With Snow White by The Huntsman p. 3
- The Dangers Of Genetically Modified Beanstalks by Prince Charmless p. 94

THAT NEW HAGUE FRONT BENCH TEAM IN FULL

By Our Political Staff **Phil Space**

IN THE biggest political earthquake to have rocked British politics for a generation, Mr Hague yesterday kicked out the Tory old guard and ushered in the exciting new face of British Conservatism.

Out went such clapped-out relics of the Major years as Peter Lilley, Sir Norman Fowler and Peter Lilley.

In came such dynamic, thrusting new unknowns as John Redwood, Ann Widdecombe and John Redwood.

Also prominent in the new Hague team are several rising young meteors from the 1997 intake, such as Andrew Yawnsley, Theresa Maybe and Edward Halfbaked.

Said Mr Hague to waiting newsmen, "Make no mistake, these are the stars of the next Conservative Government. When I walk through the door of Number 10 in 2040, they will be right behind me, unless they have died of old age."

WOMAN IN THE EYE

THE TORIES' NEW NUMBER ONE SUPERSTAR!

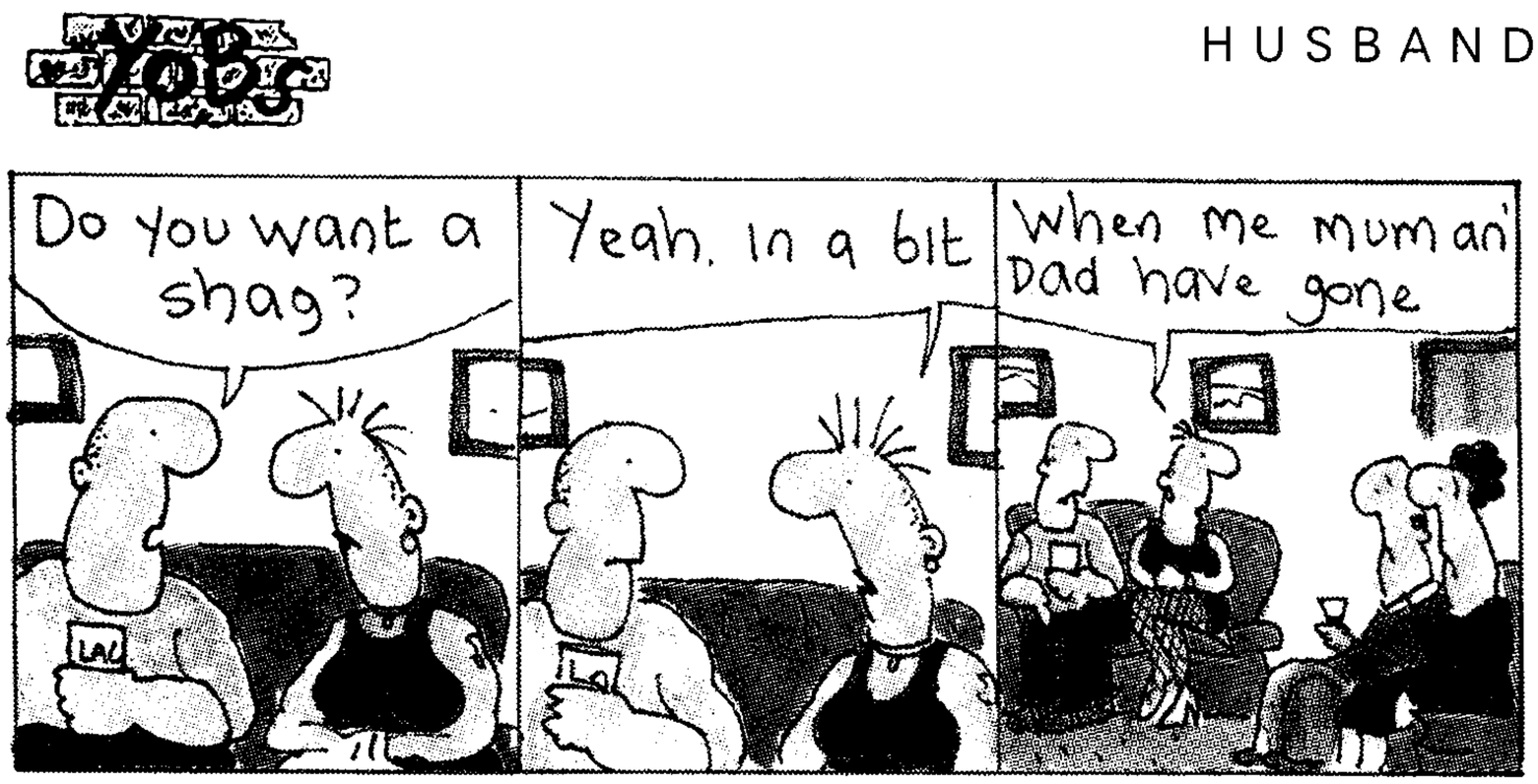
Profile By Our Political Staff PHILIPPA COLUMN

SHE's feisty, she's 5 foot 1, she's 45 – and she sure puts the fear of God into Labour's front bench.

Make no mistake, the new Shadow Home Secretary, Ann Widdicombe, is the most effective political scrapper British politics has seen since the days of Maggie Thatcher.

Her opponents may call her

Doris Yeltsin. But the Tory faithful love her for her uncanny ability to say something mildly rude about Michael Howard. *(Is this enough? P.C.)*



COMING SOON

"The Single Mummy"

HORRIFIC story of teenager who gets pregnant and then haunts Tony Blair with her demands for State aid and her refusal to get a job and take advantage of the welfare to work scheme. Terrifying.

Rating: NPG (No Parental Guidance)

Also showing:
"The Boy In Year 5 Who Shagged Me"

THE TORY PARTY An Apology

IN recent years, in common with all other newspapers, we may have given the impression that the Conservative Party under Mr Hague would never have any hope of winning an election and was totally discredited as a force in British politics. Headlines such as "Is The Conservative Party Finished?", "Is Hague The Most Pathetic Party Leader Of All Time?" and "Resign, You Stupid Bald Squit", may have led readers to believe that we in some way thought that Mr Hague was failing to give the Tory Party the leadership necessary for it to regain any semblance of electability.

We now realise, after his historic triumph in the vital Euro-Elections, that the Conservatives are now an unstoppable political phenomenon, with the dynamism, vision, energy and commitment that will make their landslide victory at the next election inevitable. Furthermore, we accept that Mr Winston Hague is a statesman of unparalleled acumen whose inspired and courageous slogan "We want to be in Number 10 but not in Europe (although we are very much in favour of the EU)" so brilliantly spoke for the feelings of the 8 percent of the total electorate who bothered to walk down to their local school and vote.

We apologise unreservedly for any confusion this may have caused to our readers, and undertake not to repeat this grotesque misrepresentation of the truth until the next poll shows Labour on 64 percent and Mr Blair having an approval rating of 98 percent.

© All newspapers.

Another Apology KEVIN KEEGAN

IN COMMON with all other newspapers, we may have given the impression that we thought Kevin Keegan was in some way a footballing Messiah who would lead his country to victory. We now realise that Mr Keegan is, in fact, a turnip-head who

(That's enough apologies. Ed.)

How I Kicked My Habit

by Tara Boomdiay-Tomkinson

IT IS now five minutes since I checked out of the internationally renowned centre for rehabilitation, The Quackery.

And, yes folks, I can confirm that it's true. Tara is no longer addicted to publicity.

I admit freely that I was an addict needing a daily fix of pictures and articles about myself. I became so desperate I was reduced to "doing" the Sunday Times.

My life was out of control. All I could think about was where I would get my next mention.

Friends were appalled. I would turn up looking terrible on the Frank Skinner Show, or in Tatler or even in Nigel Dempster's column.

But now, thanks to two weeks of therapy, counselling and encounter sessions with other minor celebrities, I can proudly say that I no longer crave publicity.

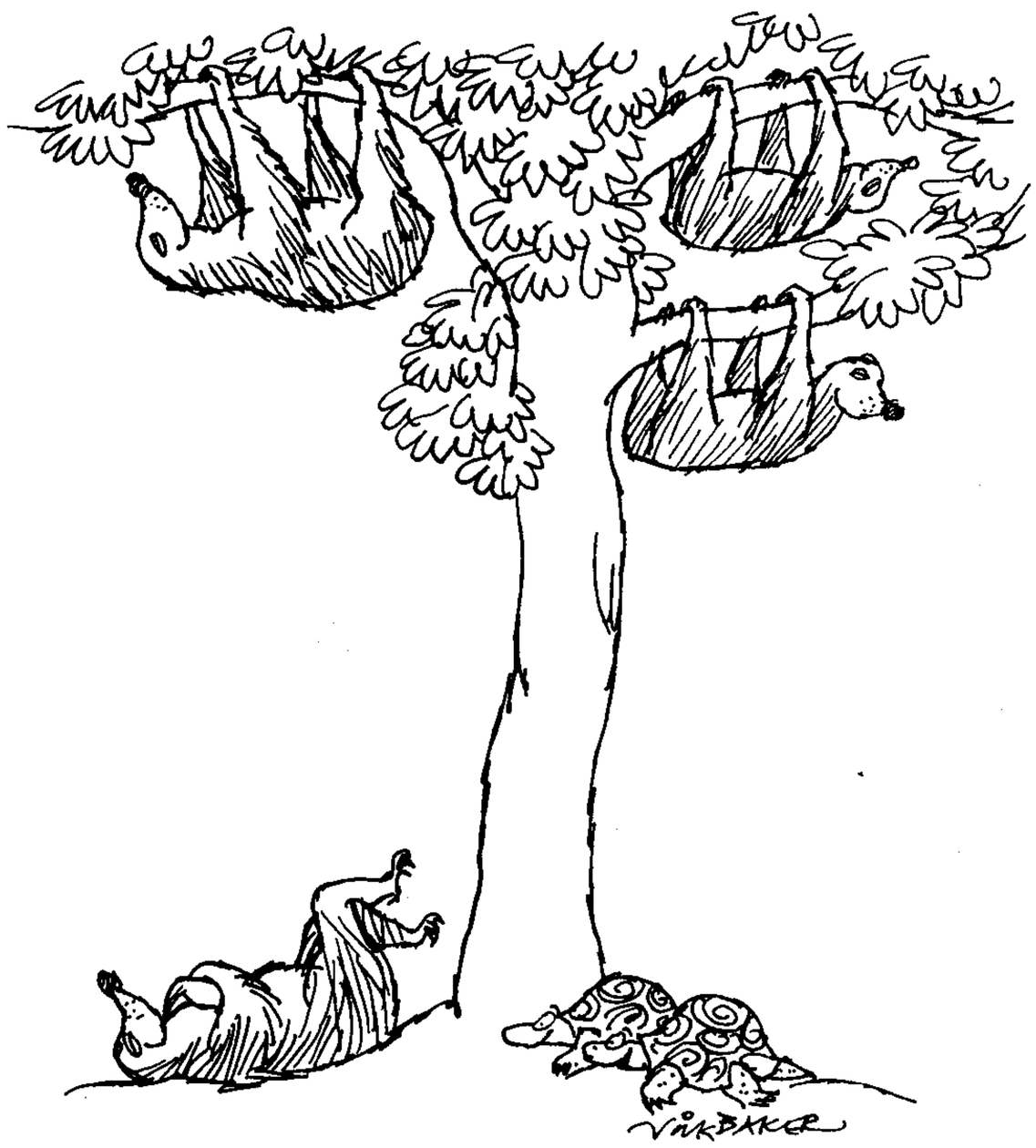
That is why I am writing this column with a picture of me on top of it.

Tara Masalata-Tomkinson, The Sunday Timezzzzz.

An Epithalamium On The Nuptials of His Royal Highness Prince Edward To Ms Gryphie Rhys-Jones by the Poet Laureate Andrew Lloyd-Motion

NOT for you, the pomp and ceremony
Of St Paul's or Westminster Abbey.
Not for you the screaming crowds,
The adulation of an adoring populace.
No, for you a more low-key affair
More in keeping with the spirit of the age.
Yours is a very modern marriage,
So you will probably soon get divorced.
God bless you, sire and ma'am.

Andrew Goingthroughthemotion



*"Now **that's** a sloth!"*

THAT HISTORIC KOSOVO PEACE DEAL IN FULL

1. Everyone has won the war.
2. No one has lost.
3. Kosovo will belong to Serbia for ever.
4. All Serbs will withdraw from Kosovo immediately, except the ones who want to stay (none).
5. The Kosovo Liberation Army will disarm immediately, except the ones who wish to become part of a local police force, in which case they are permitted to retain their weapons.
6. Kosovo will be temporarily governed for ever by Kfor, under a unified central command authorised by G8/the United Nations/ NATO/the EU, except the bits of it which are governed by the Russian army under Col. Alcoholovich.
7. Kosovo will be divided up into five zones. These will be occupied by forces from Britain, Germany, Britain and Britain.
8. American ground forces will play a key role in entering Kosovo on Day One as soon as ABC, NBC and CBS detachments are in place. After the evening news they will then withdraw again to a "safe haven" in Macedonia.
10. The Supreme Allied Forces Headquarters will be established at Pristina airfield.
11. Unless the Russians get there first.
12. In which case General Sir Michael Jackson will announce that the allies never wanted their headquarters at the airfield anyway.
13. ...er...
14. ...that's it.

Signed
S. Milosevic,
Life President of the Federal Republic of the Former Yugoslavia
B. Yeltsin,
President of the Russian Vodka Republic
Arti Maatahari,
Prime Minister of Finland
William Jefferson Clintstone III,
Draftdodger and Philanderer-in-Chief
T. Blair,
Supreme Ruler of the Universe

THE LONELY FIGURE IN BELGRADE

by the BBC's Supreme Allied World Affairs Correspondent
John Simpson

HE CUTS a poignant and lonely figure. Trapped in his Belgrade hideaway, his portly form is shrunken, his once confident speech reduced now to a tentative stutter.

For weeks the attention of the world was on him, as night after night he proclaimed the invincibility of the Serbs and the criminal folly of NATO bombing that only welded them ever more firmly together behind their leader.

Today, John Simpson is a sad, discredited figure *(cont'd p. 94)*

On Other Pages

Simon Jenkins on "How I Was Right Even Though I Was Wrong" ..... p. 10

Corelli Barnett on "Why We Should Stop The bombing Now" ..... p. 12

Dame Harold Pinter on "I Still Say Blair Is Worse Than Milosevic" ..... p. 14

Dr Thomas Stuttaford on "Does Mass Murder Cause Death?" ..... p. 10

I SEE EVIDENCE FOR WAR CRIMES

by John Pilger

Not in Kosovo, Tuesday

TODAY with my own eyes I saw incontrovertible evidence that NATO is guilty of the worst war crimes since America's genocide in Vietnam a quarter of a century ago.

The evidence was contained in several articles buried deep in the Guardian in which I, John Pilger, prove conclusively that it was NATO, not the Serbs who, on the orders of dictators Clinton and Blair, has secretly murdered millions of (cont. p. 94)

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam
Screaming Lord Sutch,
popular singer and
political candidate

So. Farewell then
Screaming Lord Sutch
Leader of the Monster
Raving Loony Party
For thirty years.

You once beat the
SDP in a by-election.

On that day
It was screaming
Lord Owen.

For that we
Salute you.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

The Daily Telegraph

A National Scandal

THIS newspaper has always set its face against the payment of large sums of money to the relatives of criminals, who seek to exploit for gain their connection with the perpetrators of malfeasance by selling their supposed "stories" to unscrupulous and unprincipled sections of the media.

It is easy to imagine the feelings of nausea and disgust which such transactions must excite in the hearts and minds of all right-thinking persons. Nevertheless, in certain circumstances, there may be a case for modest payments to be made by a newspaper to, say, the mother or daughter of, say, a former Cabinet minister who, through no fault of his own, has been hounded into prison.

There is a clear moral justification for making such payments where the victim of such injustice is, let us say, an Old Etonian.

© Charles Moore O.E.

On other pages

Exclusive: Nicola Horlick rings up Sarah Sands to tell her why she lost the Industrial Tribunal against her nanny because she didn't want to talk about her private life – and then talks about her private life at enormous length ..... p. 2
Opinion: Sarah Sands on how ghastly and uppity nannies are getting nowadays ..... p. 3
Fashion: What Nicola Horlick is wearing now that the nanny has *(That's enough. Ed.)*

The Most Moving Human Document You Will Ever Read

(exclusive to the Daily Aitkengraph)

The Ballad Of Belmarsh Gaol

A letter written by **Mr Jonathan Aitken** to his mother, **Mrs Ludmilla Aitken**

Private and Confidential
(Pass on to Charles Moore and tell him to put it in)

Dearest Mummy,

It is quite nice here and the other boys are all very nice. I have made friends with a black boy called Stokesy, who is very nice. I have helped him with his homework. Do you know, he cannot spell the word "Department of Social Security"? But otherwise he is very nice.

I am glad to say that the teachers (whom we have to call by their Christian names) are not too strict. Last night one of them let me watch "Question Time" on TV, which was very nice of him.

I have been going to chapel every day, and sometimes twice. I have said my prayers for you and the children and even Mr Rusbridger, who I am trying to learn to forgive even though he is a complete ****. In fact, some of the bigger boys here have said that when they get out, they wouldn't mind sorting him out for me.

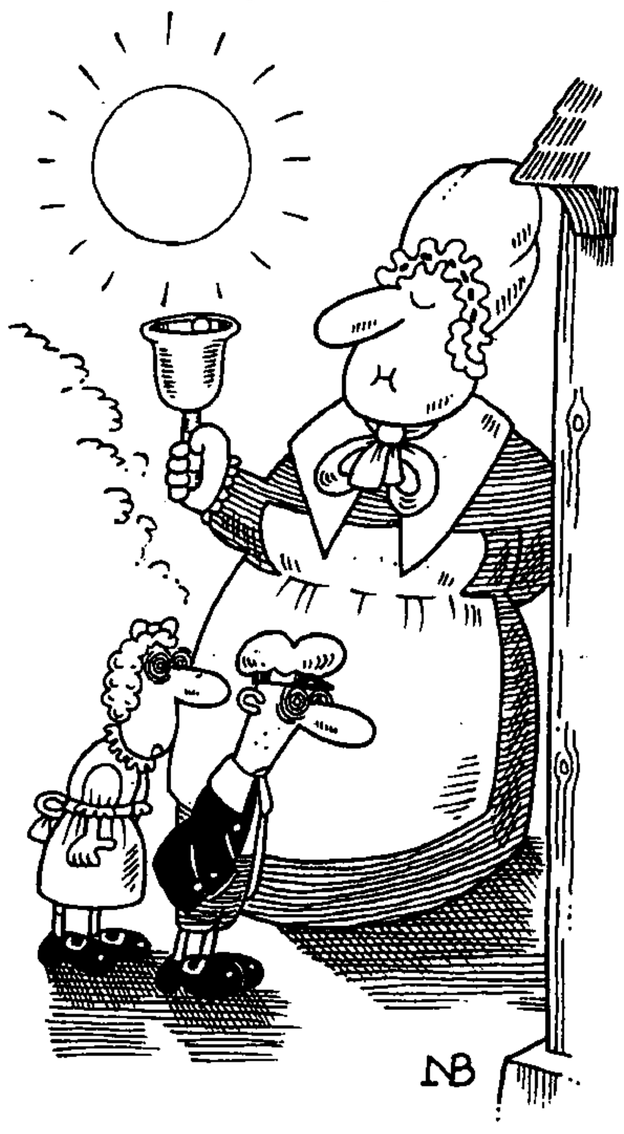
The food is very nice. Today we had pasta and salad, with apple juice. Some of the other boys like smoking funny cigarettes which have a funny smell, but this is against the rules and you will be pleased to hear that I have not joined in! I am very keen to get my Merit Badge, which the headmaster (whom we call "the Governor") has said would allow me to come home in just a few months. He is very nice (the Governor, I mean) and I am really enjoying my first term here.

I miss you and my Rolex watch very much.

Your loving son,
Jonathan.

P.S. Can you please *not* send me the tuck from Fortnum's that you promised, as it would only make the other chaps jealous and they might begin to rag me for being a snob.

Pre-School Nursery Facility Rhymes



Boys and girls come in from play,
The sun doth shine so bright today.
Leave your skipping and hide-&-seek
And revise for Key Stage 1 next week.

THE ALTERNATIVE VOICE

Dave Spart, Co-Chair of the Smash Capitalism and Windows Now Alliance *(a pro-anarchy organisation)*

ONCE again, a peaceful demonstration against world capitalism and monetary fascism has been hijacked by a small, violent group of organised militants, ie the police, who deliberately and sickeningly attempted to interfere with a totally non-confrontational protest of graffiti, arson and physical attacks on guilty employees of financial instititions... er... thus creating a so-called "riot" in central London which gave the police the excuse to close down the entire transport system of London, meaning innocent protestors, ie myself, could not get home on public transport and could not even get a cab due to shortage of cash thanks to the closure of the banks due to er... ***(Cont. p. 94)***

Those Labour People's Peers In Full

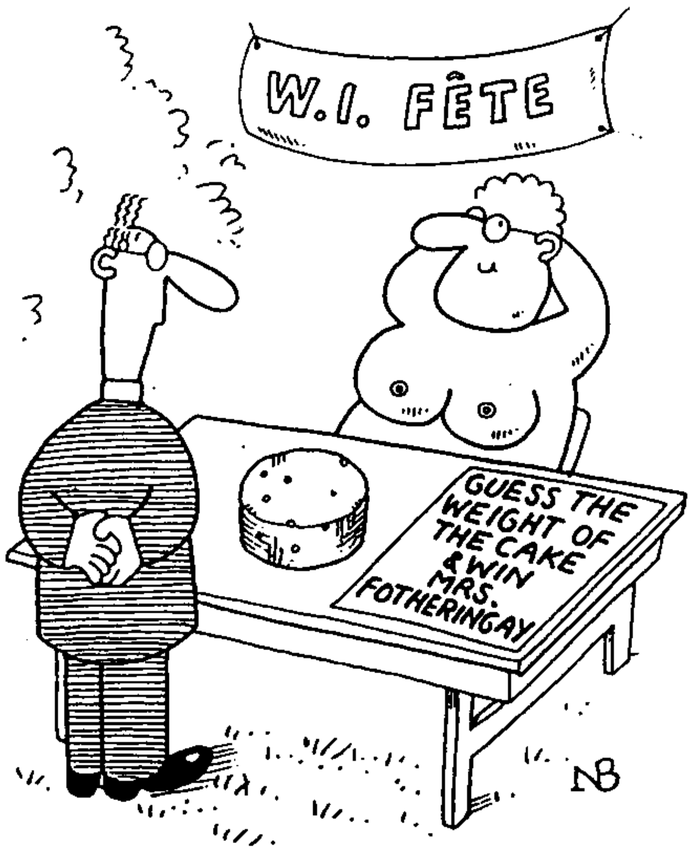
(continued from page one)

Anita Neeta, 56, Deputy Assistant Co-ordinator for Equal Opportunities in the Anti-Racism Industry. For services to the Labour Party.

Doreen Reene, 57, Assistant Deputy Co-ordinator for Anti-Racism in the Equal Opportunities Industry. For services to the Labour Party.

Robert Grauniad, 72, Chairman of Guardian Newspapers. For services against the Conservative Party.

Toquan Ethnik, 62, Chairman of Ethnik Packaging PLC, multi-millionaire businessman. For cheques to the Labour Party.
(That's enough new-style honours. Ed.)



DIARY

EDWARD: It all went brilliantly, which was great. It was a great day, which was brilliant. In a nutshell (not literally of course!) I got up in the morning, had breakfast, busied myself and so on. It was quite a challenge! Then I had a light lunch, not too heavy, really quite light, which was quite fun really, and then later in the afternoon I got married, which was brilliant. Then we had a reception – food, drink, quite a bit of talking – and finally some dancing for those who wanted to, as we were keen to make it optional. It was quite a challenge! But those who didn't wish to partake of the dancing for one reason or another really didn't have to at all. It certainly was in no way compulsory, and you didn't have to do it either. So that was the great day. It was quite fun really.

SOPHIE: The whole day went very smoothly. Guests were asked to queue in an orderly manner at a choice of two (2) banqueting tables. The Countryman's Beef Platter proved popular, but so too did the Captain's Dish, fresh salmon with a generous selection of farm-fresh salad items (optional). Guests were then encouraged to find their own way back to their tables, picking up a serviette and necessary tableware from the table at the end. Red and white wine were provided on a complimentary basis. It was a very smooth operation.

EDWARD: The great thing is to plan ahead on occasions such as these. On occasions such as these, planning ahead is the great thing. This means that you know that if A happens then B will follow, or if, on the other hand, something unforeseen occurs so that A does not happen, then C will follow instead of B – or otherwise you leave out A altogether, and jump straight to B, and then pick up the reins from there, going straight on to C, and then to D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M and so on, right up to the last stage, which could be Z, or, if it's a fairly small event, could just be nearer the middle, somewhere like N, or even, if it was a lot smaller F or G. But on this occasion, we worked our way right through the alphabet, all hands to the wheel, and it was a challenge but quite good fun all the same.

SOPHIE: And now – after the bunfight!! – we can return to normal life and our respective businesses. I will continue to manage my own consultancy operation, and my husband Edward

EDWARD & SOPHIE

will keep on making satisfactory progress in the highly competitive world of television.

EDWARD: Absolutely! And the great thing is that – despite what the media might have you believe for their own cynical motives! – we are two very definite individuals. Sophie is an individual and so am I, which is great. I think I'm giving away no secrets when I say that for quite a few years now we've been building our own lives separately but at the same time building our lives together, and I think that now the moment has come when we can say, right, that was brilliant, we've built our own lives separately, which was quite fun, and now we're going to build our lives together, and we'll see what happens. To me, marriage is all about two people sitting down to make a go of things.

SOPHIE: Let's face it, I don't want to be branded as "A Royal Wife". No way. That's not the image I want to put across at this stage. As I see it, my market niche must be more extensive than that, appealing to a wider public across a broad-based social spectrum. If we're going to make this marriage work, and I think at this stage we should, then we've got to target limited media involvement in a mutually supportive scenario. So we'll be sending regular mail-shots and info-updates to a broad base of media-related outlets, fostering the free-flow of two-way access whilst preserving a privacy-style arrangement. And despite the best efforts of the media (!) the whole baby issue is unhelpful at the moment.

EDWARD: I was just going to say that –

SOPHIE: So our long-term aim is to move towards a scenario in which our partnership can upsize with a minimum of fuss if and when a limited expansion programme is required.

EDWARD: Absolutely! I was just going to say that now we're married, which is brilliant, it really means we're not still single, so things are pretty different. As well as being sort of the same, in a different kind of way. To me, marriage is first and foremost about getting married, and it's usually done with two people. So the whole marriage thing is quite fun, which is great.

SOPHIE: We share a sense of humour, which is the main thing.

EDWARD: Yes! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

SOPHIE: Like, once we were going into this majorly big banquet – and just in time I spotted that Edward's shirt was hanging out at the back!

EDWARD: So she said, "You're shirt's hanging out at the back!" – and I said, sort of, "Whoops!" and hastily tucked it back in!

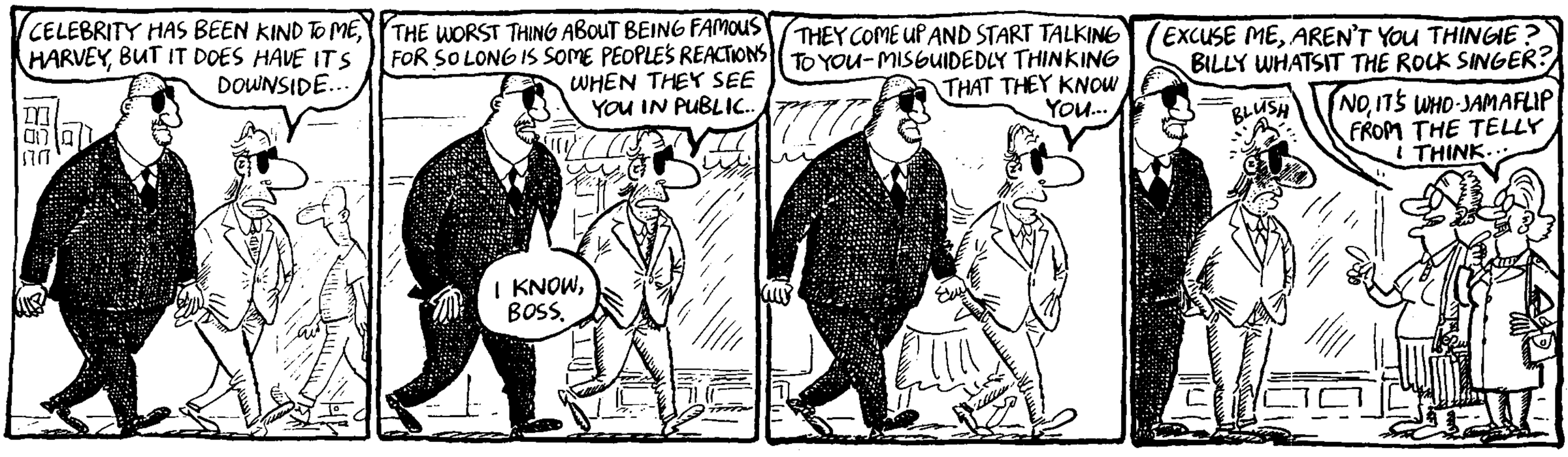
SOPHIE: Afterwards, we laughed about it for hours. But at the time it was really pretty hairy!

EDWARD: But we don't just have fun. Having fun is brilliant, yes, but it's important not just to have fun, because if you're having fun then you're leaving no time for anything else, like not having fun, if that's what you want to have, or not have, but let's face it we're about to move into the 21st century.

SOPHIE: With all that implies. We both see the 21st century as a great challenge in terms of focus-driven opportunities. I hope people will realise that we're just a perfectly ordinary working couple living in a perfectly ordinary £15 million house and as soon as the wedding publicity dies down, they'll leave us alone. Incidentally, the American video sales response has been proved very positive, and that's not even including the Canadian market.

EDWARD: Actually, there's an amusing anecdote about Canada. Ha! Ha! When I visited it in –

SOPHIE: That's all we've got time for. Bye!


CELEBRITY HAS BEEN KIND TO ME, HARVEY, BUT IT DOES HAVE IT'S DOWNSIDE...
THE WORST THING ABOUT BEING FAMOUS FOR SO LONG IS SOME PEOPLE'S REACTIONS WHEN THEY SEE YOU IN PUBLIC..
I KNOW, BOSS.
THEY COME UP AND START TALKING TO YOU - MISGUIDEDLY THINKING THAT THEY KNOW YOU...
EXCUSE ME, AREN'T YOU THINGIE? BILLY WHATSIT THE ROCK SINGER?
BLUSH
NO, IT'S WHO-JAMAFLIP FROM THE TELLY I THINK...

Literary Review

Hanniballs

Hannibal

Thomas Harris

(*Heinemann, £16.99*)

"CARLO, I want Dr Lecter to be consumed in two sittings. The first evening, I want the pigs to gnaw off his feet, with him watching through the bars... Then he can wait overnight without his feet, for the pigs to finish him the next day. I'll talk to him for a while, and then you can have him for an hour before the final sitting. I'll ask you to leave him an eye and leave him conscious so he can see them coming. I want him to see their faces when they eat his face..."

Gosh – just let me adjust my tie a little here – this is grown-up stuff, isn't it? Long years in the writing, a quarter of a million copies in print, queues round the block on the carefully staged midnight hour of its UK unveiling, Thomas Harris's new one is the sauciest publishing sensation in a long while.

You don't believe me? Not only is it oustripping everything else on the Waterstone's shelf by a factor of around ten to one – admittedly at a time when the bookshops are having trouble giving their stock away – but busloads of halfway serious opinion formers (R. McCrum, J. Walsh, E. Griffiths) have been pressed into service to acclaim its page-turning qualities.

The public wants it. The trade loves it. The critics are at any rate prepared to put up with it. Needless to say, *Hannibal* is the most stunning pile of rubbish.

Some location shots: seven years have passed since Dr Hannibal Lecter fled the pen, and a good few people have an interest in tracking him down. Mostly traumatised refugees from the earlier escapades of *The Silence of the Lambs*, they include no-nonsense FBI shit-kicker Clarice Starling (currently feeling the heat from a corrupt boss) and Mason Verger, Lecter's sixth victim, precariously alive but still avid for revenge.

With Lecter trailed back to Florence, where he has reinvented himself as the polished antiquarian "Dr Fell", temporary curator of the Palazzo Capponi (his predecessor mysteriously vanished, natch) everyone gets very excited indeed. Verger, working through some grinning Sardinian kidnappers and in cahoots with Clarice's bent overseer, has plans to feed him to the pigs. Clarice, on the other hand, is perturbed by some unignorable testimonies to old Hanny's regard. Meanwhile, the morgues both in Italy and the US (to which Lecter eventually returns) grow ever fuller of disembowelled and otherwise maltreated corpses.

A great many things will irk the sensitive spectator of this riot of hardcore jollies. Never mind the lemur-eyed obsessive's gratuitousness, which there's simply no point in complaining about any more – even low-to-middlebrow art gets its kicks from gratuitousness these days, and if you don't like it, buster, you can put down the book or walk right out of the cinema, okay?

Queerly enough, though, one of the maximally distressing factors is the patina of *style* that Harris effortlessly imparts to his creation: the flash cars, the taste for exotic truffles and fine wines, the leisure hours spent watching Stephen Hawking videos and subscribing to learned journals. This is Renaissance Man with a hacksaw, don't you know, a faintly mitigating gloss cast over the centre stage obscenities, which you imagine is supposed to make Lecter more "interesting" and "enigmatic" to us but which actually renders him even less so. We had all this concentration camp guard listening to Wagner stuff half a century back.

Every so often, down among the routine, trailer-park prose something stirs. Occasionally it's an attempt at humour ("Ummmm. I haven't had a bite all day" Lecter larkily informs the Italian policeman whom he's about to eviscerate). Sometimes it's a stylistic flourish ("He looked at Krendler as though the left and right hemispheres of Krendler's brain were two dogs stuck together" — that's right, *two dogs stuck together*). Somehow these garnishes are far more painful than the deluge of wanton cruelties, man-eating pigs and meticulously planned vengeance (it all goes wrong, of course, but don't let me spoil the completely fruitcake ending). Painful because, taken with the portrait of Lecter the cultural lodestar, they have the effect of tampering with the ghastliness within. Cannibalism? Maimings? Oh, they're such a *laugh*. As in the Tarantino films the sense of people playing with fire who barely realise that fire burns is a mite too strong for comfort.

Books of this kind invariably have their own sub-conscious self-destruct buttons. Here it comes when Harris muses: "Now that ceaseless exposure has calloused us to the lewd and the vulgar, it is instructive to see what still seems wicked to us, still slaps the clammy flab of our submissive consciousness hard enough to get our attention?" (And could I just point out, by the way, how incredibly ill-written the foregoing is?) Well, certainly not this shiny exercise in debasement. And to think that this took 11 years! I mean, you could do something useful in that time.

Books & Bookmen

■ SOON to be toppled from its position as Britain's largest bookshop by the Piccadilly Waterstone's, retaining only the garlands of "most disorganised" and "surliest staff" to keep it warm, it will be interesting to see how Foyle's copes now that the venerable Christina is dead.

Her nephew Christopher has pledged in the trade press not to sell the business "as long as I am running it". An interesting choice of words, begging the question "How long *will* Christopher be running the show at Charing Cross Road?"

"She's around here somewhere but you'll have to find her yourself"

Christina's will — described by the family as "complicated" — is yet to be read, and the beneficiaries of her 60 percent share in the business may prove more open to suggestions, perhaps from the likes of American giant Barnes & Noble, than young Christopher.

As for likely reforms to be made under the new regime, it is hoped the store's disgraceful employment policy — Christina was a great one for sacking staff the day before their length of service entitled them to any employee rights — will have died with the old lady.

■ RUMBLINGS of discontent among Waterstone's and Dillons staff about the tactics of Alan Giles, chief executive of parent company HMV Media.

Sales growth on the shopfloor is deeply disappointing; and while competitors are booming, web site sales are almost non-existent. The feeling is that the decline has been caused by a move away from Tim Waterstone's original ideal of "booklovers selling to booklovers".

Giles, known to minions as "the Weasel", joined as Waterstone's md in 1993 from Boots's ailing DIY concern, Do It All. He immediately set about making knowledgeable staff redundant, with some branches losing 20 percent.

He views books as so much "product", once admitting proudly in an interview that he is "not well read".

These attitudes are likely to prevail now that Giles has appointed one of his old cronies from Boots, David Kneale, to head the bookselling division. Kneale is known to share Giles' enthusiasm for retail dogma, the latest manifestation being the potentially suicidal "rebranding" of Dillons in Gower Street as a Waterstone's, which has been proposed against howls of protest from customers and staff.

Despite all the problems growth *has* been achieved in one area: Giles' salary. The *Bookseller* suggested recently he had "more than doubled" the £157,000 a year he enjoyed when Waterstone's was part of WH Smug. In contrast, the salaries offered to booksellers joining the new flagship store on Piccadilly range from £11,141 to £13,266 a year.

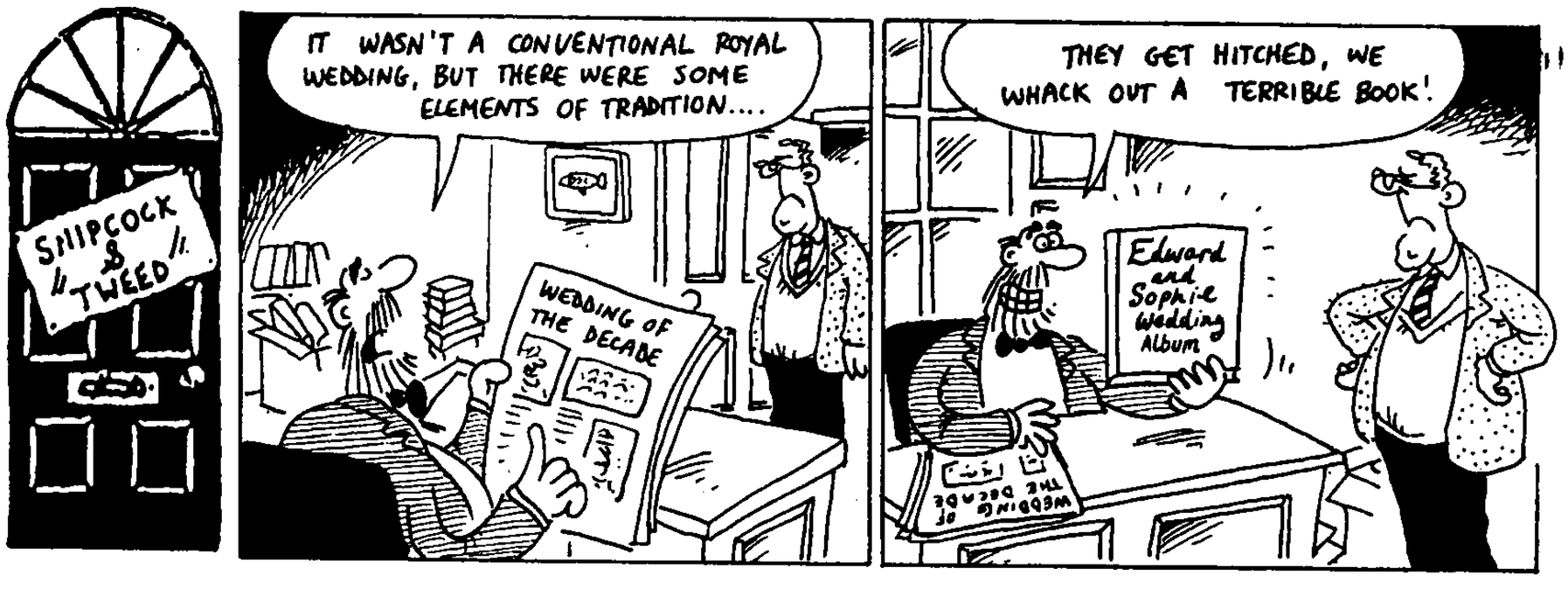
■ WHAT a positive fellow is Robert McCrum, literary editor of the *Observer*.

As the *Eye* revealed recently, he spiked Peter Conrad's review of the new Rushdie novel after deciding it wasn't complimentary enough about his old chum Salman, and hastily commissioned a more fulsome assessment by Hermione Lee.

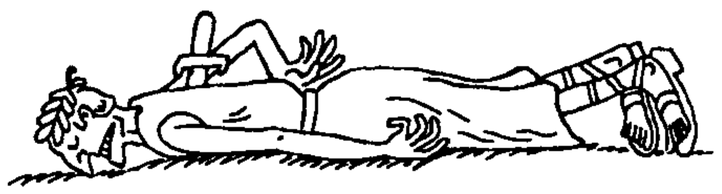
Now *Observer* hacks are wondering when their paper will get round to noticing the new novel by Paul Auster — a truly dire and excruciating tale told by a dog, which has been universally rubbished. As it happens McCrum has had a review on the stocks for several weeks, written by his predecessor Tim Adams, who liked the book no more than the other critics. Curiously, however, the piece has still not appeared.

Can this by any chance be related to the fact that Auster's novel is dedicated to his dear friend, er, Robert McCrum?

'Bookworm'


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
IT WASN'T A CONVENTIONAL ROYAL WEDDING, BUT THERE WERE SOME ELEMENTS OF TRADITION....
WEDDING OF THE DECADE
THEY GET HITCHED, WE WHACK OUT A TERRIBLE BOOK!
Edward and Sophie Wedding Album

IN THE BACK



BRITISH BIOTECH

Taste of its own medicine

ANDREW MILLAR, the brave lone doctor who struck out against his biotech bosses when he realised they were putting profits before patients, has been publicly vindicated almost a year after a parliamentary select committee refused to become involved with his case.

But although British Biotech (BB) grudgingly announced on 8 June that it had dropped a suit for breach of contract against Dr Millar, its former clinical director, and awarded him damages and costs said to total close to £1m, four of the board who opposed him have kept their jobs.

This should have been the perfect opportunity for the Commons select committee on science and technology, which investigated the matter last summer, to defend the public interest against corrupt and mighty conglomerates. Instead members declared themselves unable to probe Millar's plight and restricted their enquiry to an anodyne overview of the effect of BB's dealings on the biotech industry.

Dr Ian Gibson (Lab, Norwich North) who sat on the committee, told the *Eye* he believes they failed to exercise their power properly. "They could have supported Millar much more avidly," he said. "But they didn't want to get involved with hard politics. It was a very new committee at the time, only five months old and they did not realise the powers they have."

Millar was suspended from his post on 10 March 1998 after blowing the whistle to shareholders about his fears over drug trials. He believed tests on Zacutex, a pancreatic drug, showed that it was not working and that doses given to patients of an anti-cancer drug Marimastat were too low. He voiced concern to Perpetual, a small company which had invested in BB, that chief executive Keith McCullagh and other senior management had failed to keep shareholders properly updated.

BB started to sue Millar last June, and backed by the *Times* and the British Medical Association he countersued for wrongful dismissal and defamation.

McCullagh quit over the controversy last September, although his departure was smoothed by a pay package worth more than £600,000. Former chairman John Raisman left at the same time, but non-exec directors David John, Marius Gray, John Wilkerson and Keith Merrifield remain on board.

The new chief executive Dr Elliott Goldstein was not much better disposed towards Millar. In November 1998 Goldstein agreed to meet Millar "without prejudice" – and then leaked details to the press, describing him as "a very difficult man to deal with".

Eventually Charles Hampson, who took over as chairman of BB last September, agreed to two meetings with Millar on 20 April and 12 May this year. Hampson's readiness to listen followed close on the heels of BB's decision on 25 March to discontinue trials of Zacutex, the drug Millar had voiced concern about all along.

On 10 June the US securities and exchange commission ruled that BB press releases which contributed to a soar in share prices for the company contained "materially misleading statements" about clinical trials of Marimastat. The company is also currently under investigation by the London stock exchange.

BB is soldiering on despite a massive drop in the value of its shares from £5.25 in January 1995 to 15p on the day Millar's victory was announced. It is still channelling its energy into developing Marimastat. The only advance? The dosage given to patients has been increased — precisely the step Millar suggested from the start.

POLICE

Ill Met again

STILL smarting from the savaging he received from the Macpherson inquiry into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence, you might have thought Sir Paul Condon, the Metropolitan police commissioner, would welcome any opportunity to learn from his mistakes.

But apparently not. Recently he and two police doctors had to pay £100,000 in damages to a young hip hop and rap star, Sipho Jozana, over his detention at Hackney police station in 1994.

No doubt because he was black and had dreadlocks, he was written off as "a hepatitis-positive drug addict". In fact he was suffering the onset of schizophrenia, which affects about 50,000 people in this country. He did not have hepatitis and nor was he a drug addict.

The fact that Sipho had been arrested for acting bizarrely in the street, lying in front of a bus, knocking someone's wig off, weaving in and out of traffic – might, one would have thought, alerted police and doctors. But despite repeated warnings from his mother that her son was seriously ill, in danger of killing himself and needing urgent medical treatment, Sipho was locked alone in a cell at Hackney police station for 36 hours.

For the last critical 45 minutes he was left to mutilate himself while officers watched – and waited for protective clothing to arrive – before going to his aid. He had bitten two gaping holes in his arms and plucked at his veins and tendons with his fingers and teeth. One officer noted him "pushing his fingers in a hole in his wrist" and swinging his arms around to encourage the blood to flow out.

He had been seen trying to gouge his eyes from their sockets and in his frantic attempt to kill himself, he had tried to rip off his testicles.

By the time police, in full riot gear, entered his cell and an ambulance took him to hospital – Sipho, star of *Top of the Pops* and a documentary on British hip hop, had suffered permanent disability. Irreparable nerve and tendon damage has left both hands numb, twisted, weak and unable to carry out simple everyday tasks.

Psychiatrists agreed that had he been hospitalised when his mother first raised the alarm, and had police followed their own custody guidelines, "Sipho would have been unlikely to have caused himself such serious injury".

As is common in many cases of alleged police malpractice, Sir Paul was prepared to pay a large sum of taxpayers' money to settle the court action without actually admitting that his officers had done anything wrong. And as is equally common in such cases, for victims like Sipho such payments bring hollow victory. More than anything else they want an explanation for their treatment and an apology. In Sipho's case psychiatrists said an apology would actually assist him towards recovery.

After the court case Sipho's lawyer, Fiona Murphy, wrote to the commissioner asking for exactly that. She also put in writing an offer from Sipho and his mother to talk to police and police surgeons about their experiences and explain Sipho's illness, so that potentially fatal mistakes are not made again. Sipho was prepared to believe the callous disregard for his welfare was born out of ignorance rather than malice. "They forgot I was a human being," he says.

But in a curt reply from Commander Michael Craik, on behalf of Sir Paul, Sipho received neither an apology – "...I do not consider it appropriate to write to Mr Jozana further" – nor an acceptance of his offer – "...I am unable to accommodate such an unstructured element in our current training programme."

Commander Craik added: "Mr Jozana may be assured that the Metropolitan Police Service has an effective mechanism for learning from experiences such as this and developing its training accordingly." Tragic then that in 1998 – four years after Sipho's encounter with the Met – Julie Anderson, another young schizophrenic known to be at risk, took her own life in a cell at Croydon police station.

● **SERGEANT Gurpal Virdi's attempt to clear his name of charges the Metropolitan police contrived against him and return to work (see *Eyes passim*) continues.**

Meanwhile the latest Met apologist to join the ranks refusing to comment on the case is Metropolitan police committee member Inder Uppal. Uppal was happy to be displayed as part of the Met's ethnic minority recruitment drive in Southall on 30 May, where he joined commissioner Sir Paul Condon in greeting religious and community leaders and being heckled by members of the public. When it came down to a real case of racial tension within the Met, however, Uppal was less forthcoming.

He replied to a letter from Sgt Virdi with the mantra to which he is becoming accustomed: "It is not appropriate for me to intervene."

● **YET another of Murkeyside's finest has succumbed to the curse of appearing in BBC2's Mersey Blues documentary earlier this year.**

This time the black spot was passed to inspector Paul Matthews, who was sacked by chief constable Norman Bettison for "discreditable conduct". The charges relate to Matthews allegedly using undue influence to stop a ticket being processed for a traffic offence.

Matthew now joins inspector Jon Duffy, accused of downloading porn on to a police computer (Eye 974), and detective inspector Elmore Davies – currently doing time for corruption – as the latest on the list to kiss goodbye to their police careers after putting in "colourful" performances in the Beeb's "fly on the wall" TV series.

Bettison has sworn never again to allow camera crews such unrestricted access to the workings of his force. Yet the programmes have proved very helpful in enabling him to carry out an effective purge of the "canteen culture" coppers he wants to get rid of. Those plods who've been given the boot could always take up acting, and apply for parts in the new series of Liverpool One, starring Samantha Janus. Except that viewers wouldn't believe that so many bent coppers actually exist in real life.

WORLD OF HYPE

Ad Nauseam

BOSSES of the Mersey Partnership, set up to promote Liverpool and encourage business to the city, were irritated to read an anti-scouse rant in the advertising industry mag *Adline* last week.

In it, columnist Neil McGeehan described the city as "the arse end of the M62" and said he found it "difficult... to find any sympathy for anything connected with Liverpool". He even described the national galleries and museums on Merseyside as "a contradiction in terms".

Fortunately the Mersey Partnership has a £1m contract with a good advertising agency to counter such negative stereotypes of the Pool. None other than McCann-Erikson, whose md Sue Little just happens to be married to... Neil McGeehan.

● Five days after BA announced the return of the Union Jack on the tail fins of half its 340 planes, the head of the company who masterminded the disastrous scrapping of the red, white and blue insignia was made a CBE. Wally Olins, head of Wolff Olins, the firm which rebranded "Britain Plc" and covered BA planes with funny daubs of foreign art, was honoured in the Queen's birthday honours for his services to the use of design in .

WORLD OF WORK

Brotherly... hatred

THINGS just seem to go from bad to worse for John "The Walrus" Edmonds, supremo of the ailing GMB and last of the union movement's old-style barons.

As if last year wasn't bad enough, with speculation about how the GMB managed to lose £6m on the sale of its Ruxley Towers estate in Surrey, Edmonds is now at the centre of allegations of staff abuse and bullying at his Wimbledon HQ.

In January the GMB's in-house expert on workplace bullying, Warren Glover, was sacked after he complained that an internal investigation into an "incident" was a whitewash. After Glover consulted m'learned friends, the GMB paid him a five figure sum as compensation.

In February, after a furious stand-up row at a meeting of the union's governing body, Edmonds was forced to agree to a "truth commission" to investigate the multitude of allegations. Edmonds managed to secure an agreement that allegations from former members of staff would not be investigated and has since been throwing "voluntary early retirement" money around like confetti in an effort to rid the building of disaffected staff. But it seems it's not been enough in some cases.

Edmonds now finds himself fighting an employment tribunal claim for victimisation and bullying from former supervisor of the secretarial unit Elaine Wright. She claims that after she won a previous tribunal case against the GMB (because her job had been downgraded while she was on maternity leave), Edmonds and other managers made her life hell.

Wright alleges that the GMB never complied with the earlier tribunal's decision, that she received hate mail and that matters came to a head with Edmonds ranting and raving at her like a mad man. Such was the fury of Edmonds' outpourings some witnesses thought he was on the verge of a seizure.

Edmonds denies all the claims and has hired top city lawyers Fox Williams to defend the action. The only problems being that the handwriting on the hate mail bears a remarkable similarity to that of another senior GMB official... that Edmonds chose to make his rant in an open-plan office... and that Wright kept a diary and made good use of her pocket tape recorder.

Stand by for a cracker of a tribunal!

DEPORTATION

Clutching at Straw

WHO is this bearded man sharing the spotlight with Tony Blair? Why, none other than fugitive Bombay film and musical director, Nadeem, wanted in India for questioning over the murder of another music magnate, Gulshan Kumar, in August 1997.

Moves to extradite him are progressing at Pinochet-pace – bogged down in legal argument – allowing him to continue his celebrity lifestyle in the UK.

Meanwhile the government seems far more anxious to send back to India a less famous individual, whose only crime seems to have been to come here as a child, fall in love, marry a British woman and have a child of his own – against the wishes of both their families.

Zuber Latif is facing deportation after living in London for 11 years. He came as a 14-year-old on a student visa and was expected to return to India when he was 21.

However, in the meantime he had met Khatija and fallen in love. His family, furious that he would not go through an arranged marriage, cut him off. Khatija's family also tried to break them up, imprisoning their daughter for three months in her bedroom and telling immigration officials Zuber was an illegal immigrant.

Because he had been forced to find part-time work to support himself after his family disowned him, Zuber was found to be in breach of his visa and was issued with a deportation notice. He and Khatija have fought their families and immigration authorities ever since.

The stress has prompted Khatija to attempt suicide and psychiatrists say she is suffering trauma and depression, which put her at severe risk if Zuber is deported. Their child risks going into care.

Hackney's Labour council is among those who have written to home secretary Jack Straw asking him to show compassion and allow Zuber to remain with his family.

When Labour came to power, Straw was proud to abolish the controversial "primary purpose" rule regulating the entry of spouses into the country because he said "the pernicious rule penalised genuine marriages and divided families".

Yet here is a genuine marriage that has survived against the odds — and Straw seems determined to penalise the couple and divide their family.

LIBEL

Making a killing

ALMOST eight years after it was broadcast, a sensational Channel 4 documentary called *The Committee* is still keeping lawyers profitably employed on both sides of the Atlantic.

The programme, made by Ulster hack Sean McPhilemy, purported to expose a secret group of 24 Unionist businessmen and politicians who sat round a table and decided whom to assassinate. Names of the unlucky victims were then supposedly passed on to terrorists, many of them serving Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and army members, who carried out the hits.

There were immediate and loud demands from Channel 4's then bosses Michael Grade and Liz Forgan for the police to round up the leaders of this evil fraternity. But what ought to have been a deadly serious issue degenerated into farce as C4 began to attack the RUC for doing what Forgan and Grade had requested – ie investigating the programme's allegations.

C4's refusal to help Inspector Knacker with his inquiries ended in melodramatic scenes at the high court in London as the channel's then chairman Dickie Attenborough lined up with Grade and Forgan to defend McPhilemy's right to protect his sources. Moving speeches followed as a £75,000 fine was imposed for contempt of court.

The *Sunday Times* then claimed that McPhilemy's allegations were untrue and had been dreamed up by Jim Sands, a maverick Unionist who – as the producers freely admit – was the principal witness and appeared in disguise throughout the show. McPhilemy sued, and the *Sunday Times* case has been winding its bizarre way through the courts exceedingly slowly ever since 1993.

But other libel actions may reach the starting line first. One is in America, where McPhilemy published a book based on his programme, catchily titled *The Committee – Political Assassination in Northern Ireland*. This goes a good bit further than the TV show did and, without providing any evidence, implicates Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble in dozens of murders. Trimble obviously denies this as rubbish.

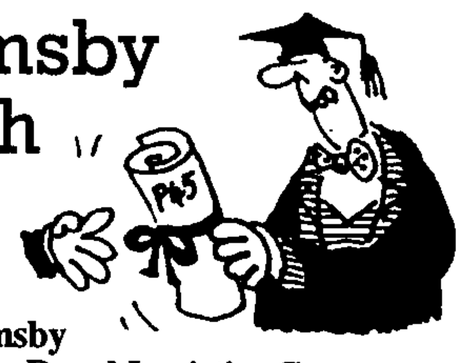
Two wealthy Ulster car dealers are also named in the book as members of the "committee". Perhaps McPhilemy assumed they wouldn't sue in the US, where libel cases are almost impossible to win. The car dealers are determined to try, however, and are claiming $100m from McPhilemy and his publishers Roberts-Rhinehart. Oh, and a retired RUC man named in the book is suing the American retailer Barnes and Noble.

But now David Trimble himself has decided to enter the fray. Despite clashing with the book's publisher at Bill Clinton's St Patrick's Day hooley, Trimble was resigned to being unable to sue, as elected representatives are effectively barred from bringing defamation suits in America. But internet retailer Amazon then decided to promote McPhilemy's tome on its British website, complete with more than a dozen rave "reviews" from Irish Americans. This provided the opportunity for Trimble to sue in London. Eventually, in one court or another, all will be definitively revealed.

Meanwhile m'learned friends look forward to a prosperous new millennium. The combined legal bills of those involved in this epic litigation are thought to have already reached £1m.

HIGH PRINCIPALS

It's Grimsby up North



ANOTHER internal inquiry has come to nought at Grimsby College, where the Royal Logistics Corps withdrew around £1m worth of business it had with the college after senior military staff raised concerns about certificates for national vocational qualifications (NVQ) being given to soldiers at the RLC's base in Gütersloh, Germany.

As colleges are paid by the certificate, they are not known for the rigour of the checks they make on the work NVQ students carry out. But in this case the RLC's top brass noticed that certificates were being given to students who had done no work whatever.

Earlier this year the staff involved in the scam were suspended while an investigation was carried out and lorries were sent all over Britain and the continent to retrieve college hardware from the RLC's camps. The suspended staff have since left the college and the results of the inquiry have never been revealed. Principal Marilyn Hawkins recently told staff the loss of the contract would not hit the college too hard. But for her the blow has been softened by the fact that a newly refitted suite of plush offices has been vacated by staff working on the RLC contract. She moves in next week.

● **WHEN Stephen Byers was schools minister he would bate gatherings of teachers by telling them that schools should become more like businesses.**

The head teacher should become chief executive and buy in services from companies and consultants from the private sector and free themselves from the irritating distraction of local council control.

People who knew about the college sector warned the arch-Blairite MP for Tyneside North that when this model was applied to further education colleges after they were privatised in 1993, it led to the whole sector becoming mired in financial corruption and nepotism.

Byers has long gone but his legacy remains in the form of education action zones, an experiment for pushing up standards in failing schools by pulling in private sector finance and expertise. And, sure enough, there are already signs that the new zones are taking their cue from further education.

At the Halifax "learning zone" in Calderdale, the latest minutes of the zone's management committee record congratulations to their new project bursar Heather McGowan on beating off a strong field of candidates for her job. What they do not mention is the built-in advantage she had over other candidates.

In her previous job she had worked as assistant to Peter Bartle, chief adviser at Calderdale local education authority, the man who has just been appointed director of the zone.

In the City

BRITISH offshore tax havens have played key roles in the disappearance of up to $1bn from 11 American insurance companies.

The man who helped to make the money disappear, banned former broker Martin R. Frankel, has himself now disappeared and is believed to be on the run in Europe.

Back in the United States, federal and state investigators are trying to find out what happened to the money which seems to have vanished via the British Virgin and Channel islands as well as Switzerland.

The FBI was called in last month after firemen summoned to Frankel's Connecticut estate by an automatic fire alarm found shredded files ablaze. Among the documents recovered was a charred "to do" list headed by "launder money". The property was owned by an allegedly London-based partnership called Sundew International Ltd. There is no UK company of that name.

Investigators in five states are probing local insurance companies who had invested money with Frankel — barred from handling clients' money by the US Securities & Exchange Commission watchdog in 1992 after he was accused of fraud.

The insurance companies in Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma and Tennessee (not the best regulated of states) were controlled by the Thunor Trust of Nashville via International Financial Corporation.

But it now emerges that Thunor was controlled by the St Francis of Assisi Foundation to Serve and Help the Poor and Alleviate Suffering, which felt it necessary to carry out such a worthy cause using the tax and secrecy advantages offered by the BVI. Clearly, helping the poor had been highly profitable for the foundation as it was supposed to have invested $600m with Thunor! How much of that was real remains to be established.

But investigators have established that the foundation does indeed exist and has been registered in the BVI. Also located on the British Caribbean colony is St Mary's Foundation for the Protection of Homeless Children, which owned Frankel's investment concern Liberty National Securities which he ran in part using the alias Eric Stevens. Less certain are suggestions that both foundations are backed by the Vatican!

It would seem that little if any of the money handed over by insurance companies was invested in anything other than Frankel's offshore future. The FBI has traced one transfer of $44m to a Swiss bank in Geneva.

What may turn out to be a sophisticated Ponzi circular money scam ended when one of the 11 insurance companies, Franklin American, asked for $161m back. Just how much is really missing remains to be seen as it is suspected the insurance company balance sheets could be as bogus as the foundations. Chances are much of the money supposedly invested from the BVI was the insurance companies' own money recycled. But insurance investigators believe the loss could be at least $300m.

WHILE Virgin Rail may make delayed passengers furious with last year's higher profits, elsewhere in the Branson empire profits continue to remain a rarity.

Latest corporate health bulletin is from Virgin cinemas whose parent company managed to produce its results to January 1998 at the end of May 1999. It is a well known City maxim rarely disproved that bad figures always take longer to add up than good ones. And so it is with Virgin Cinemas Group.

On turnover little changed at £84m it managed to lose £6.7m compared with £4.7m the previous year. Accumulated losses have now reached £75m.

More disturbing — to anyone other than the grinning pullover and his acolytes — is that creditors due within a year had almost quadrupled to £118m! This was because most of the group's borrowings became repayable on demand after the 1998 year end. These comprised a £90m senior term facility and a £30m revolving credit facility. The Virgin Cinemas Group directors were said to be "considering a number of potential options for refinancing". The company has another £61m due to be repaid in ten years.

The net result was that at January 1998 Virgin Cinemas Group had net liabilities of £29m; produced a turnaround in cashflow from £50m in to £43m out; had net borrowings of £52m against net repayments of £58m; and was dependent on the continued support of its offshore parent Virgin Entertainment Holdings in the BVI.

Just how easily this can be provided is unclear because, as the Virgin Cinemas Group accounts note, for both Virgin Entertainment Holdings and its parent Virgin Entertainment Group "group accounts are not available to the public".

It is purely coincidental and completely unrelated that the day these accounts were signed - 28 May — three American directors of Virgin Cinemas Group resigned. Byron Blount, Richard Ekleberry and Jeremy Ferris all joined in September 1997 with the last financing. Blount and Ferris represented Colony Investors and TPG Partners who had backed Richard Branson with £34m in loan notes and held shares in the BVI parent. Part of the refinancing or sign of a dispute with the bearded one?

WHY should the political honours scrutiny committee so dislike Michael Ashcroft that it vetoed his peerage — a small reward from Tory leader William Hague for donating £1m a year to the party? After all, political donations have never got in the way in the past — look at Sir, now Lord, Graham Kirkham.

Could it be that the Inland Revenue, consulted, along with HM Customs, Scotland Yard and MI5, to see if there are any objections to those nominated for political honours, were less than flattering?

In years gone by the Revenue effectively blocked a knighthood for Tory donor Abdul Shamji well before he went to prison for perjury. It did not like the offshore arrangements behind his Gomba group and had more than a passing interest in Shamji's tax affairs.

The Revenue also delayed a peerage for Sir Gordon White, like Ashcroft a tax exile (Bermuda not Belize) who worked for the Hanson group he had helped found out of the United States but, like Ashcroft, spent much time in Britain. The Revenue's

"You're an idealist and a fool, son — there's no living to be made in bank-managing!"

suspicions of White resulted in an investigation which forced him to make a secret private settlement in relation to tax due for the time he spent in London beyond the 90 days a year allowed for non-residents. It was some years afterwards before White joined his partner James Hanson in the Lords.

Not of course that the Revenue might harbour similar thoughts about the man who liked the Tory Party so much he bought it with the fortune accumulated since Ashcroft took his company (ADT) and himself offshore. After all, the Revenue accepted both relocations and not only is Ashcroft entitled to be in the UK for up to the 90 days limit but, thanks to the last Tory government, he is now able to have a luxurious home in Westminster.

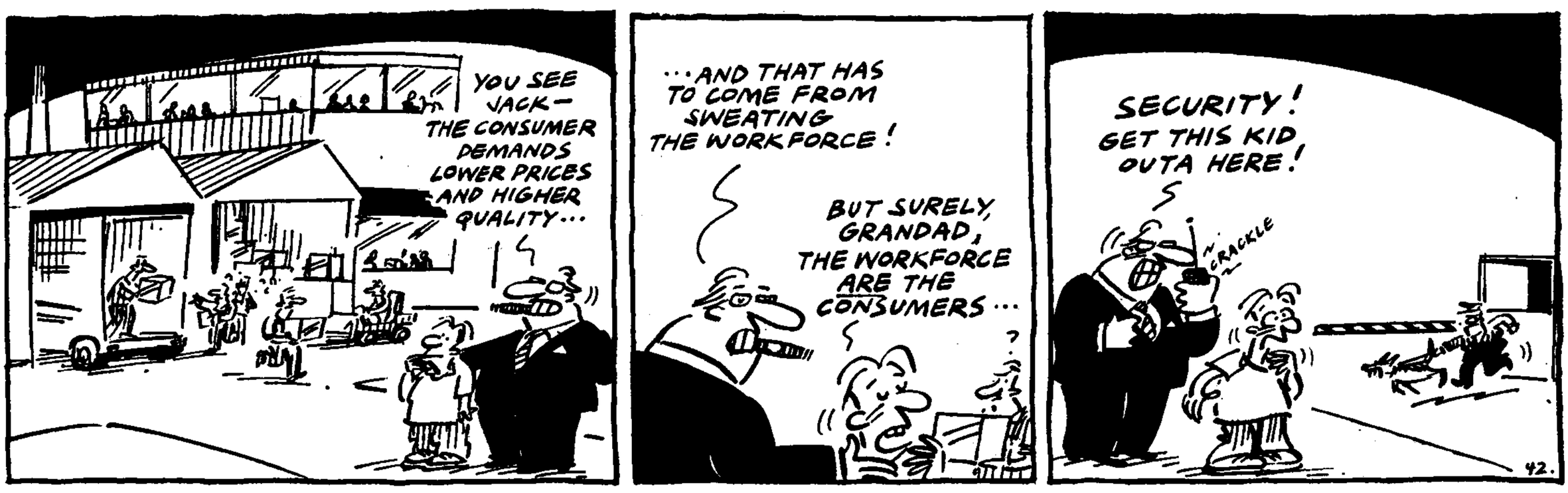
WORD from Saudi Arabia suggests the problems of banker Sheikh Khalid bin Mahfouz and his National Commercial Bank, the kingdom's largest private bank, are escalating and go well beyond the dispute over commissions on the $6bn strategic storage project (Eye 977). It is suggested that bin Mahfouz is now in dispute with the Saudi royal family, for whom NCB is the longtime personal banker, over amounts approaching £500m. Indeed so bitter has the dispute become that it is not clear just how much management control or even involvement the sheikh has in the bank which he ran for so many years. There is talk that the Saudi Arabia Monetary Authority is paying close attention to NCB.

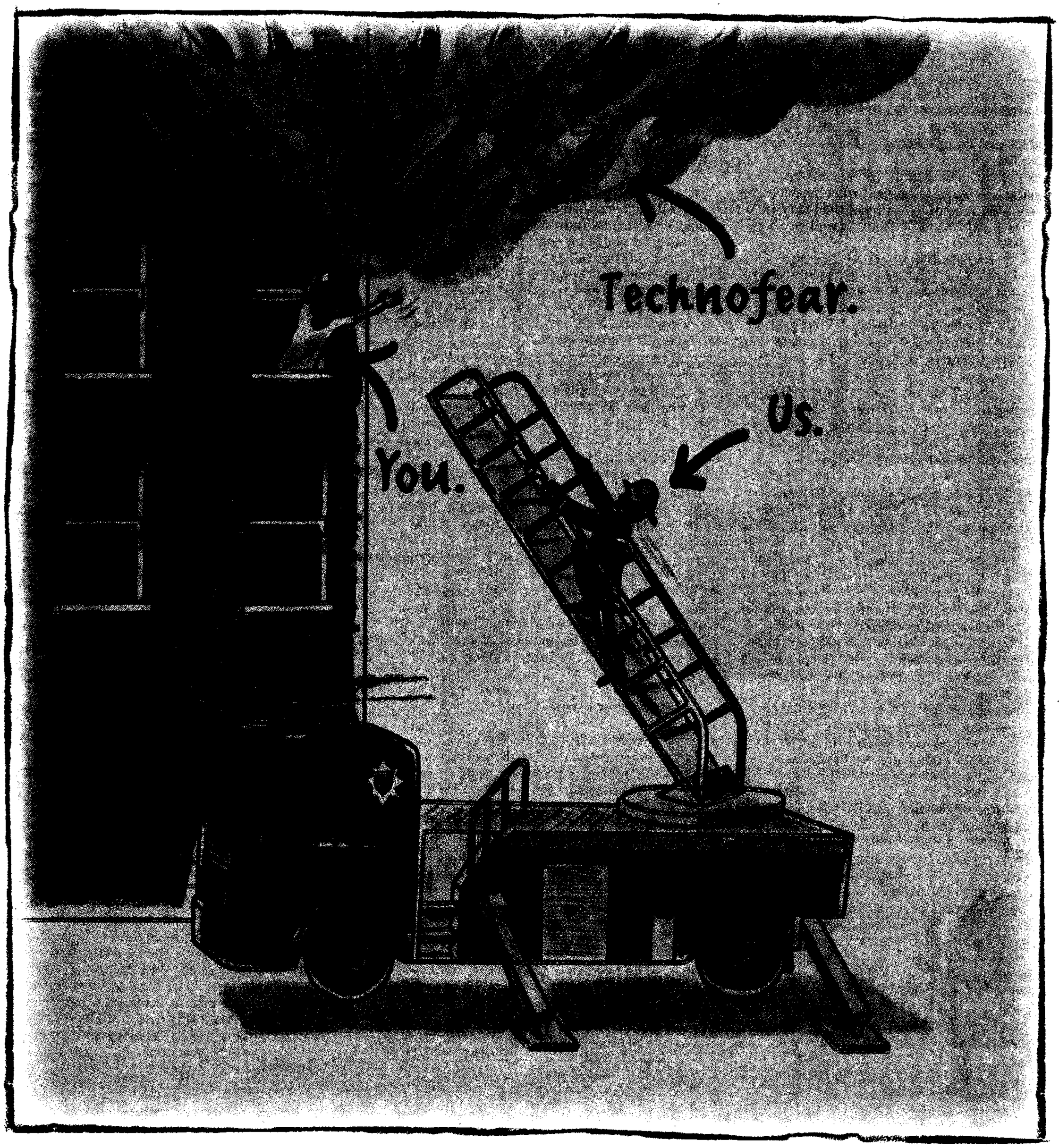
LEADING corporate sleuths Kroll Associates have been busy expanding since the 1997 merger with armoured car makers O'Gara. Recent weeks have seen the takeover of London insolvency experts Buchler Phillips. Despite this, all is said to be far from tension-free between the Kroll and O'Gara camps. Rumours of a rift caused the shares to almost halve from $41 at one time. Meanwhile at the bottom of the food chain some Kroll creditors, especially the subcontractors used for inquiries where deniability and/or specialised expertise is required, are said to be less than impressed by the company's tardiness in paying. Some complain of being made to wait more than 70 days for payment.

'Slicker'

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE/RIGG


YOU SEE JACK— THE CONSUMER DEMANDS LOWER PRICES AND HIGHER QUALITY...
...AND THAT HAS TO COME FROM SWEATING THE WORKFORCE!
BUT SURELY, GRANDAD, THE WORKFORCE ARE THE CONSUMERS...
SECURITY! GET THIS KID, OUTA HERE!
CRACKLE
42.



Be honest. Do you really understand this digital television thing? Do phrases like "interactive tv" trip lightly off your tongue in conversation?

Thought not. Well, you aren't alone. We know lots of intelligent, sensible people, who felt exactly the same. Until they talked to us, that is.

Who are we? We're the people who've brought you commercial television and radio for the last forty years.

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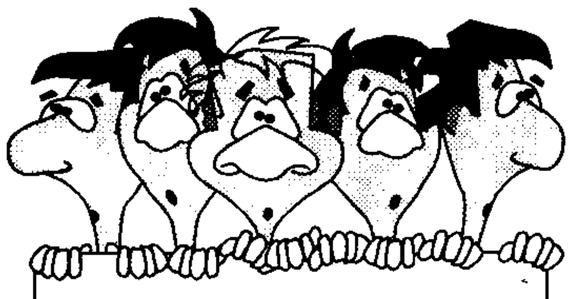

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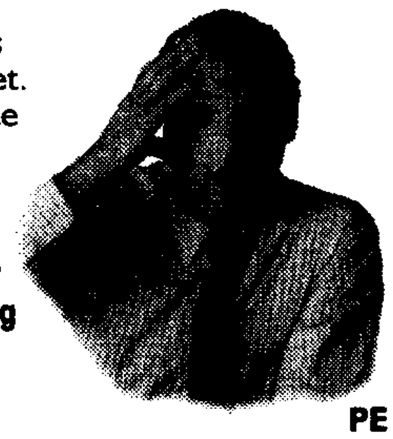

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SPEECHWRITING by Mitch Murray – see page 31...

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CHARITY COUNSELLING adoptees, birth parents, children and adopted parents, desperately needs benefactors large and small. Fighting back after financial crisis. Under new management but requires resources to build a future. Post-Adoption Centre, 5 Torriano Mews, Torriano Avenue, London NW5 2RZ (0171 284 0555).

DESPERATE, disillusioned nurse. Please help. TSB 77-62-13, 08274068. Grateful thanks.

FINNISH LADY needs help with tuition fees. Need £2000 – grateful for anything. Midland 40-06-15, 41235044. Box 3979.

BANKERS WILL make my family homeless. We need lots of money. Please help. Halifax 11-03-20, 00072997.

LEFT WITH CRIPPLING DEBT, no pride, can't afford one. Anything, Lloyds 0215683, 30-91-59. Box 4079.

TALENTED FILM DIRECTOR NEEDS £30,000
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DESPERATE, DESPERATE, desperate young family. Debts of £52,000. Help gratefully received. Barclays 20-45-77, 50088773.

YOUNG CLASSICAL musician seeks to expand her highly regarded music school through acquisition of premises. Please be our patron. Tel 0958 581304.

FUNDS NEEDED for HIV programme and research. Halifax 110355, A/C 00307045.

ANGELS REQUIRED to give new heatre company wings! Nat West 60-50-06, 80519644.

EX-ALCOHOLIC – drink ended BA. Second chance? 1K drink debts. Could do so much. Barclays 20 71 06, 80445665.

NURSE LEFT WITH HUGE debt, struggling, please help – anything! Halifax 11-08-70, 00229666.

ALTRUISTIC EX VSO NURSE starting again – needs £7000 to start a business to help people with cancer. All donations gratefully accepted. Progress reports supplied. Nat West 60 17 24 a/c 96719281 02. Box 0879.

PLEASE HELP. Desperately need finance, pay off £25000 debts, rebuild broken, bitter life. Abbynat 09 01 26, 21226604. Thankyou.

STUDENT FILMAKERS require £950 to complete graduation project. Halifax 11-03-36, 00380079.

DESPERATE TO LEAVE violent husband. Please can you help? Eternal love and gratitude. Midland 40 45 25, 11007416.

SOCIALIST CRIPPLED BY BANK after 5 year PhD fighting cat viruses. Exhausted and nowhere else to turn. Barclays 20-79-29, 40333352. Thanks. Box 4979.

SUBVERSIVE ANGEL sought by new producer to assist prime time Edinburgh Fringe production. Ability to embrace the avant-garde essential. Box 4579.

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10K IN DEBT and desperate. TSB 77-71-71, 38974660. Many thanks. Box 2279.

ART STUDENT just starting out, desperately needs money for equipment. Box 4479.

YOUNG LONELY widow needs help with horrendous debts. Everlasting thanks. Nationwide 07-01-16, 04778824. Box 4779.

AMBITIOUS TEAM needs funding for street children project in Africa. Any amount welcome. Nationwide 06527160, 07-44-56. Thankyou.

£500 BELOW TARGET for whale and dolphin conservation society Icelandic sponsored cycle. Lloyds 30-97-25, A/C 7164629. E-mail iceland-biker@hotmail.com

HELP ME educate my children. First Direct 40-47-86, 50764558. Box 4879.

OXFORD GRADUATE desperate to clear £6,000 debt before teacher training in September. BARCLAYS 20-78-42, 70537330.

PLEASE HELP to help others. Would-be acupuncturist needs finance to complete expensive training. Midland 40-10-04, 31061399.

27 YEARS CARING for others I forgot to care for myself. Suffering Menieres Disease 4 years now – some help needed please. RBS 16-23-25, Ac/No 12415332 or write Box 1779.

BUSINESS BANKRUPT – house at risk. £25,000 to save house and marriage. Grateful for any help. Nationwide 07-00-30, 57467758. Thankyou.

STRUGGLING COUPLE need new windows before winter. £2,000 approx. Abbey 09-01-26, 30347914.

SURVIVOR OF MID-LIFE CRISIS
putting the pieces together again.
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ABBEY 09-01-26, 21468789.
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YOUNG LADIES worldwide seeks penpals, friends, lifemates. Free details, photos! HERMES, Box 610188/S, 10922 Berlin, Germany. Fax: 0049 30 25299775.

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MALE, 38, seeks refined lady (25+) To Ride The Wings Of Love. London Box 2979.

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SASSY, SORTED, slightly scatty designer, mid-50s – seeks single, solvent, cultured, interesting hedonistic Own Man. West London. Box 3279.

RUSSIAN WOMAN anglophile, lively 53, speaks 5 languages but not an intellectual, WLTM male for long-term friendship on current visit to UK. Box 0679.

SUGAR DADDY – tall, cultured, successful man, 40, Bristol/London, seeks a younger woman to spoil and pamper and to enjoy the Summer with. I live life to the full; film, theatre, eating out and eating in, laughter and the rich tapestry of life. If you would like a fun relationship, then please write to me with your telephone number to Box 2579.

PROFESSIONAL AUTHOR of erotica, male, 39, life not much life art, seeks muse. Box 2479.

MARRIED MUSICIAN, 50, cultured, intelligent, shy, male, seeks female correspondent(s) to stimulate brain. laughter, libido. Water signs only. Box 3379.

ARE YOU BORED? Witty, attractive, graduate male, young 30's, seeks intelligent, beautiful woman for uncomplicated fun/ friendship. Would suit yummy mummy. South West area. Box 3579.

LOOKING FOR LIVELY female, 22-32, with soh and shorts to join farmer, 32, as partner assisting setup/running of farm in North Tanzania. Photo of shorts required. Box 0579.

GREAT LEGS, wonderful smile – elegant female artist, fifty, seeks successful man (muse?) with sense of humour and brains for life session. Box 0979.

VOLUPTUOUS REDHEAD, graduate and musician, seeks tall, sociable, solvent man with wit (25-40), London/SE. Box 1079.

COUNTRY LANDOWNER, 50, kind and generous, wishes very much to meet an attractive, uninhibited lady for occasional, regular, discreet liaisons and genuine quality friendship, of mutual benefit. North West area. Box 3479.

ATTACHED SCOT, 48, has yacht, seeks companion for sailing sea and no strings relationship. Box 1279.

REFINED, aristocratic Hungarian young lady with interests in music, riding, fencing, seeks suitor from titled English gentry with appropriate resources. Box 1379.

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PUBLISHER, 50, BORED with occupying his bed like a Starfish, seeks clever, sensuous, but uncrustaceous woman to share loafing around London shores, expeditions to other pools, and eventually perhaps, a duvet. Box 3679.

RICHARD LARGE seeks Mary Hinge. Richard: tall, slim, unpretentious, kind. Mary: slim, dark, earthy. 30-50. Together: prove lasting love and fun, excitement are compatible. S. Bucks. Box 1879.

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AFFECTIONATE, SENSITIVE and attractive lady, 43, would like to share her interests (classical music, reading, dancing and walking) and life with a romantic, unpretentious, caring, witty gentleman, 40-55. London replies only. Box 2079.

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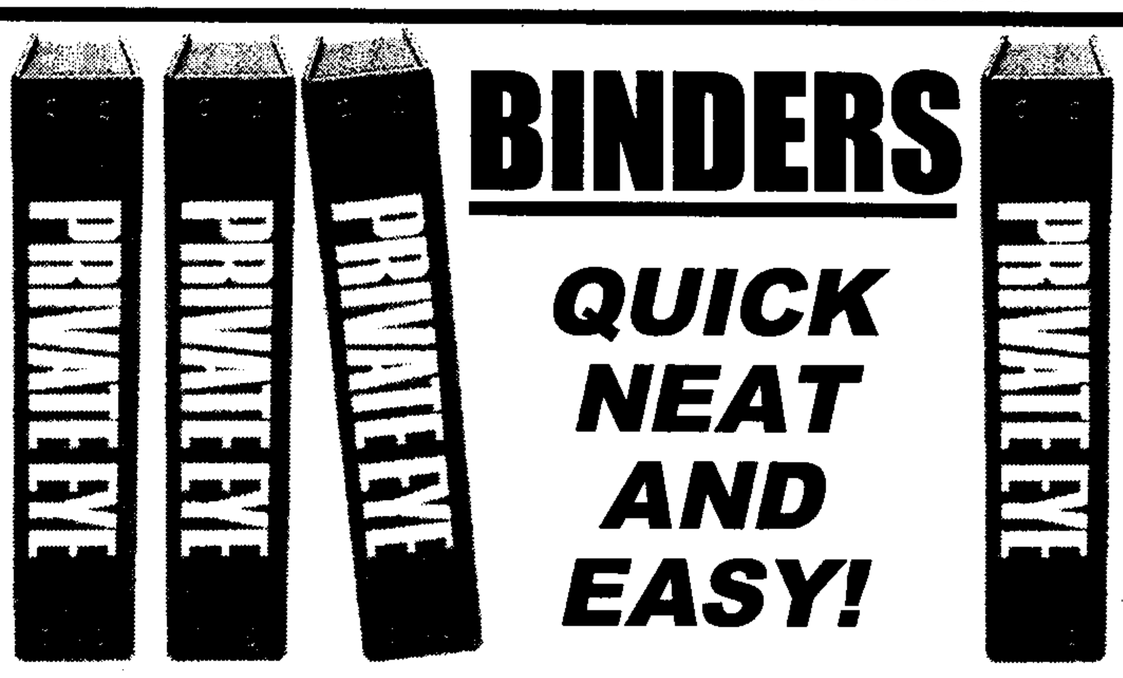

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